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F. H. Hedge.

GOETHE AND SCHILLER:

THEIR LIVES AND WORKS.

INCLUDING

A COMMENTARY ON GOETHE'S FAUST.

BY

HJALMAR H. BOYESEN,

PROFESSOR OF GERMAN LITERATURE IN CORNELL UNIVERSITY; AUTHOR OF "GUNNAR," "A NORSEMAN'S PILGRIMAGE," "TALES FROM TWO HEMISPHERES," ETC.

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TO BAYARD TAYLOR.

UNTO those altitudes of thought where Day
Reigns e'er serene, where unrelenting law
Guides circling worlds and growth of tiniest straw,
Thou led'st with prescient step my doubting way.
And from those radiant heights where naught could stay
The daring eye, there burst upon my view,
Uplooming 'gainst eternity's vast blue,
The image of the mighty sage. The gray,
Forgotten ages spread about his throne
As if his lofty solitude to guard,
And large, eternal voices — Nature's own —
Spoke to the wakeful senses of her bard.
Here have I traced the record of his fame;
Let me inscribe it, friend, with thy dear name.

H. H. B.

ROME, *Dec. 1st*, 1878.

PREFACE.

IT seems necessary to preface a few remarks to indicate the origin, scope, and purpose of the present volume. It was not from the beginning a premeditated enterprise. During the last four years and a half, while I have been delivering annual courses of lectures on German Literature in Cornell University, beside a separate course on "Faust," extending through two terms, a large amount of material in the way of notes and observations on Goethe and Schiller, partly original, partly the result of reading, has been accumulating on my hands. In 1873, while I was studying at the University of Leipsic, the deeper significance of Goethe's life and activity began to dawn upon me, and since then the continued study of his writings has only cleared and strengthened those first impressions.

It became a necessity of my life to make myself acquainted with the works of other disciples of the master, and in this way quite an extensive Goethe library was collected, partly by the Cornell University, partly by myself personally. Whatever new books of special value have appeared, I have been in the habit of excerpting for the benefit of my students, until suddenly I found that I had quite unconsciously gathered the material for what might be a book of some interest.

It follows from what I have said, that I do not claim entire originality for every opinion expressed in this volume. It would be next to impossible to avoid repeating what may have been said by other authors regarding subjects which have been so thoroughly discussed as the writings of Goethe and Schiller. It has been a frequent experience of mine on reading a drama of Schiller, or one of Goethe's poems, and jotting down my impressions on a piece of paper as they occurred to me, that perhaps two or three weeks later I have made the discovery that Gervinus, or Hettner, or Julian Schmidt has noticed nearly the same points. Thus in re-reading, a few months ago, "The Bride of Messina," and paying particular attention to Schiller's somewhat lame defense in his preface for having introduced the elements of three religions into the tragedy, the reflection occurred to me (indirectly suggested by a recent reading of the Icelandic Njal's Saga) that it is a dangerous experiment to represent two religions as coexistent in a poem or drama, unless the conflict between them is the theme and the principal tragic *motif*. Not very many days after, I opened the second volume of Julian Schmidt's "History of German Literature" at random, and my eyes fell upon a very similar statement. Nevertheless I can say that my opinions, although in some instances not uninfluenced by those of others, are always based upon a careful, conscientious, and sympathetic study of the text; and where they coincide with the judgments of the above-named scholars, it is not necessarily a proof that I am directly indebted to them. Where I have quoted, I have of course given full credit to the original in a footnote, and I have also been careful to acknowledge any

debt of a less direct character of which I have been conscious.

It may be necessary to state that, as the book has been written entirely in this country, I have had access to no new documents, and have therefore been obliged to rely upon books for my biographical material. Grimm's excellent Life of Goethe ("Goethe, Vorlesungen gehalten an der Königlichen Universität zu Berlin," von Hermann Grimm, Berlin, 1877) appeared just in time to furnish me with the results of the latest investigations, and Palleske's "Schiller's Leben und Werke" (neunte verbesserte Auflage, Stuttgart, 1877) has as yet not been superseded. I have, however, not followed any of these authorities blindly, but have taken pains to compare the various biographies, and, where the accounts conflicted, have accepted the one which seemed especially to embody the spirit of Goethe's or Schiller's life, or which seemed best substantiated by irrefutable documents. Thus, in Goethe's case, I have, beside Grimm, constantly consulted Viehof ("Goethe's Leben," dritte verbesserte Auflage, Stuttgart, 1858) and Goedeke ("Goethe's Leben und Schriften," Stuttgart, 1874) and, in the case of Schiller, Caroline von Wolzogen ("Schiller's Leben, Verfasst aus Erinnerungen der Familie," Stuttgart und Tübingen, 1830) and Hoffmeister ("Schiller's Leben, Geistesentwickelung und Werke," Stuttgart, 1842).

No work on the two great coryphei of German literature that has ever come to my notice displays a profounder insight and a more sympathetic spirit than Hettner's History of the Literature of the Eighteenth Century ("Hermann Hettner, Goethe und Schiller. Separat-Abdruck aus H. Hettner's Literaturgeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhun-

derts," Braunschweig, 1876). My debt to this author is of a nature that cannot easily be expressed in foot-notes. Hints that I have derived from his writings have proved of incalculable value, not so much on account of the positive information they furnished, as by their suggestiveness. I have also had frequent occasion to consult the literary histories of Gervinus (G. G. Gervinus, "Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung," fünfte Auflage, Leipzig, 1874), Julian Schmidt ("Geschichte der deutschen Literatur seit Lessing's Tod," fünfte Auflage, Leipzig, 1866), and Gottschall ("Die deutsche Nationalliteratur," zweite Auflage, Breslau, 1861).

As regards my commentary on "Faust," I have followed no one authority, but have used freely the abundant material brought together by Düntzer, Kreyssig, Hartung, Leutbecher, Vischer, Rosenkranz, Hinrichs, and Bayard Taylor. Believing, however, as Mr. Taylor says, that Goethe is his own best interpreter, I have especially endeavored to elucidate the obscure and apparently conflicting passages in "Faust," by references to Goethe's other writings and to the published volumes of his conversations and correspondence. The first clew to an adequate interpretation of "Faust" I found some years ago in Spinoza's "Ethics," although I can hardly claim the merit of having been the first to make this important discovery. Vischer ("Goethe's Faust, neue Beiträge zur Kritik des Gedichts") has very ably developed the philosophical problem of the poem, and I shall not attempt to disguise the fact that I am his debtor. I have by no means in every instance accepted his verdict, which is apt to be stated in a slightly acrimonious and needlessly authoritative manner,

but his vigorous style has stimulated my own mind and opened up to me new avenues of thought and speculation.

It only remains for me to express my deep and heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Bayard Taylor, without whose friendly interest and valuable advice the present volume would never have seen the light. I thank him for the use, so freely extended to me, of his excellent library, and for his ready assistance and encouragement in my scholarly pursuits. It has long been an open secret that he has himself for many years been gathering material for a joint biography of Goethe and Schiller. It is needless for me to say that I do not enter the lists with him as a peer and rival.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY, ITHACA, N. Y., *June* 16, 1878.

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JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE.

GOETHE.

I.

Es wird die Spur von meinen Erdentagen
Nicht in Æonen untergehn. *Goethe's Faust.*

THE life of a great man, like any of the great phenomena of nature, is capable of various interpretations. Each biographer approaches it with his own favorite theory and finds very much what he wishes to find, and he departs believing that he has expressed the great man completely, while in reality it is only himself he has expressed with any degree of completeness. Nevertheless, his labor is not in vain; he will, very likely, evolve a capital of new facts which will enable his successor to judge more clearly than he did, and in time all these colored views, embracing the whole gamut of human opinion, will gradually combine into the pure white light through which the true character of the great man will shine unobscured.

The incompleteness of all biographies, however excellent.

There is no name in the literary history of modern times which is even remotely comparable to that of Goethe; with every year that passes, it gains a larger significance. In its suggestiveness it is as unlimited as life itself. It is only a shallow critic who imagines that he has exhausted, or can exhaust, its full meaning. Catholics [1] and Protestants,[2] basing their

The growing importance of Goethe in modern literature.

[1] *Goethe's Faust und der Protestantismus. Manuscript für Katholiken und Freunde.* Von Wilhelm von Schütz. Bamberg, 1844.

[2] *Goethe's Faust als Apologie des Christenthums.* Von C. F. Cludius. Berlin, 188.

argument upon some detached passage in his writings, have claimed him as their own. Spinozists have pronounced him the most illustrious disciple of their master; and still others have seen in him the apostle of artistic paganism. None of these were either wholly right or wholly wrong. Goethe, with the sovereign right of the artist, could embrace all these tenets in his universal creed, without being in danger of contradicting himself. "For my part," he writes to his friend Jacobi, "with the manifold directions in which my nature moves, I cannot be satisfied with a single mode of thought. As a poet and artist, I am a polytheist; on the other hand, as a student of nature, I am a pantheist, — and both with equal positiveness. When I need a God for my personal nature, as a moral and spiritual man, He also exists for me. The heavenly and the earthly things are such an immense realm that it can only be grasped by the collective intelligence of all beings." [1]

Varied and antagonistic views concerning him.

Goethe's universal creed.

It is in this universality of Goethe's mind, this elevation above all the narrow limits of sects and schools and special sciences, that one must seek the true key to his greatness. The study of his writings is a perpetual journey of discovery; it is as stimulating as mountain-climbing; every fresh effort rewards you with a larger view of the world about you. Your intellectual horizon is constantly widening.

Goethe's universality the key to his greatness.

It is now a full century since Goethe began his literary activity; and we must by this time have reached the proper distance from which we may view him in his true proportions. The judgment of his contemporaries was necessarily partial and one-sided. They stood too near him to see how great he was; and most of them lacked the humility to perceive the distance which still separated them from him. Nevertheless, from those who knew him most intimately, and whose judgment was

The proper distance from which to view him.

[1] Quoted in Bayard Taylor's translation of *Faust*, p. 296.

not distorted by some special hobby which he could not countenance, we have many valuable utterances, which taken collectively throw much light upon the various phases of his many-sided character.

"Goethe's heart," says Jung Stilling, "which few knew, was as great as his intellect, which all knew."

The testimony of contemporaries.

Wilhelm von Humboldt, Merck, Eckermann, Riemer, Chancellor von Müller, and many others bear similar testimony that his intellect was not, as the great mass of the public seem to believe, developed at the expense of his heart. Hot-headed theorists and partisans like Lavater, Mentzel, and Börne, whose narrow vision allowed them to see but one thing at a time, and this with the greater intensity, had naturally no patience with the broad impartiality and the serene, unimpassioned equilibrium of Goethe's mind. I admit that they were quite excusable in reviling him; and the public of that day, whose patriotic enthusiasm he refused to share, were excusable in listening to their revilings. But to posterity these idle tales are of small account. The Germans themselves have now learned to value the priceless inheritance which he left them in his life and his writings, and the wisest among them honor him no less because he held himself aloof from the political turmoil of his times, because, by an inborn necessity of his nature, he abhorred all violent and destructive processes, among which he included war even in a righteous cause, and rather trusted to the regenerative force of a slow, uninterrupted development. If he had been a patriot, in the narrower sense, he could not have been Goethe; the Olympic breadth and serenity of his vision, in his old age, which enabled him to survey the wide arena of nations and nature's vast economy, were not compatible with that intense absorption in the present and that ardent concentration of the mind upon special issues which make the partisan, the reformer, and the patriot. But men of the latter type Nat-

Goethe's attitude toward politics.

ure turns out daily by the thousand, while the former she reaches perhaps once in a century.

Goethe's birth and parentage.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe was born in Frankfort-on-the-Main, August 28, 1749. The conjunction of the stars at the hour of his birth, he tells us, was most favorable. His family had, a few generations back, been plain artisans, and had by dint of energy and perseverance gradually risen to prosperity and social eminence. Goethe's father had inherited a very respectable fortune, enjoyed a good education, and had traveled considerably in his own country and in Italy; in his thirty-eighth year he married Katharina Elizabeth, daughter of the magistrate (*Schultheiss*) Textor, and bought the title of imperial counselor. He was a stern, formal, and strictly upright man, scrupulously neat and orderly, and not without artistic and literary tastes. His pedantry and despotic disposition were, no doubt, trying to his wife and children, who stood in awe of him rather than loved him. The son speaks of him always with respect, but seldom with affection.

Goethe's father.

Goethe's mother.

Goethe's mother was a merry, genial, and whole-souled woman, of moderate culture, simple and yet dignified, one of those rare women who make the world happier by the fact of their being in it. Her good-humor was contagious; she saw only the sunny side of existence, and she made every one who came in contact with her share her joyous philosophy. She seems never to have grown old; even in her later years the charming ease and sympathetic geniality of her girlhood never left her. Princes and literary celebrities felt themselves honored by her acquaintance; and to correspond with Frau Aja, as the public fondly christened her, was a privilege which even a grand duchess of Weimar eagerly solicited. Those of her letters which have been preserved to us show a delightful sense of humor and a healthful, vigorous spirit.

All that was beautiful in Goethe's memories of his child-

hood and early youth naturally clustered about this happy, girlish mother. She was a playmate and companion to him, and the confidante of all his boyish sorrows; she told him stories, shared his youthful enthusiasm for Klopstock (whom the father had placed on the *index expurgatorius*), listened, probably, with fond pride to his own improvisations, and secretly took his part in his occasional rebellions against the paternal authority. The son, in return, throughout his long life cherished her name with tender regard and affection. When he rose to fame, she might well be conscious of the reflected glory which his greatness shed upon her; she sympathetically followed his career, was proud of his achievements, but was never surprised by them. She kept open house for all his friends, and no one who stood in any relation to Goethe could pass through Frankfort without stopping to pay his regards to her. All who had once been under her roof, often men of the most opposite sentiments and convictions, felt the charm of her presence and became her staunch friends and admirers.

His love for his mother.

She sympathizes with his rebellion against the paternal authority.

Frau Aja's old age.

Goethe was a singularly precocious child. His Latin style at the age of ten was correct, if not elegant. He early experienced the need of giving some external existence to the fancies which already then agitated his imagination; he therefore gathered his boy friends about him and told them wonderful stories, of which he was himself usually the hero. One of these fantastic tales (*Märchen*), entitled "The New Paris," he has preserved to us, probably in a somewhat improved shape, in his autobiography. Although the influence of the so-called folk-books (*Volksbücher*) is easily traceable, "The New Paris" nevertheless shows a naturally exuberant fancy and great power of invention; but it is absurd to attribute to it, as Göschel has done, any deeper significance, as foreshadowing the poet's career.

Goethe a precocious child.

"The New Paris."

Klopstock was the favorite poet of Goethe's boyhood; the declamatory ardor and sonorousness of his verse fascinated him. Then the "Messiah" was forbidden fruit, which circumstance may have added to its charm. As the book had to be borrowed clandestinely from a neighbor, and every precaution to be taken lest the father should discover it, the boy thought it advisable to commit the most attractive parts of it to memory. Standing on a chair in the nursery he would impersonate the enraged Satan and hurl the most frightful maledictions at his young sister Cornelia, who in the character of Adramelech would respond in equally vigorous language. One Saturday evening, he tells us, as the father was receiving a visit from his barber, the two children were seated behind the stove, whispering delightfully polysyllabic curses at each other. Cornelia, however, in the midst of a wild tirade, gradually forgot the father's presence and spoke with increasing violence: —

Reads Klopstock clandestinely.

Scene in the nursery occasioned by the reading of the "Messiah."

"Help me, help! I implore thee, I pray, and, if thou demand'st it,
Worship thee, outcast! thou monster and black malefactor!
Help me! I suffer the torment of Death, the eternal avenger," etc.

The honest barber, startled at the vehemence of her discourse, poured the soap-lather over the counselor's bosom; a trial was held on the spot, confessions followed, and the pernicious hexameters were once more interdicted.

After a brief attendance at a public school and a long course of private instruction, Goethe was, in the year 1765, matriculated as a student in the University of Leipsic. It was his father's wish that he should study jurisprudence; and although his own inclinations pointed in another direction, he submitted, and began to attend lectures on Roman Law. Leipsic was at this time the centre of the French culture which, during the eighteenth century, had spread throughout the cities of Germany, perverted the

Matriculation at the University of Leipsic, 1765.

Leipsic a Paris *en miniature*.

national taste, and retarded the growth of the national literature. Gottsched, the leader and chief representative of this artificial and imitative school, was yet alive, but he was no longer the literary autocrat he had been in his earlier years. The effects of Lessing's critical activity were beginning to be felt, and Herder, too, had lifted his voice in protest against the hollow, soulless pedantry of the old régime; but so far, Leipsic had refused to lend her ear to the new prophets. She prided herself on being a "Paris *en miniature*," made a specialty of etiquette, and, on the whole, still drifted on leisurely in the track which Gottsched had marked out. Gellert, who, since the dethronement of the leader, was the principal literary personage of the city, and professor of literature and æsthetics in the university, was a dry and formal man, although the author of various lachrymose comedies and sensational romances. Goethe approached him with great reverence and high expectations, but does not seem to have derived from him any stimulus to poetic activity. Gellert's authorship was purely mechanical, and personally he lacked that warm, full-pulsing humanity which alone can inspire young men with enthusiasm. His marginal criticisms on Goethe's essays, written in red and blue pencil, contained the usual professorial cant, and were neither very original nor very convincing.

Gottsched's influence waning.

Gellert's lectures.

In spite of all his good intentions, Goethe soon found his zeal for learning and his industry in the pursuit of it gradually relaxing. He began to discover other attractions in the city, outside of the university, and his attendance upon lectures became more and more irregular. His experience in metaphysics he describes as being especially disheartening. He could not understand why mental processes which he had always performed unconsciously and with the greatest ease had to be so minutely dissected and accounted for; it surely did not help him to reason any more clearly

Goethe's zeal relaxing.

His disgust with metaphysics.

than he had done before; and as for the various theories which were propounded regarding God and the immortality of the soul, they had a mystical and unsatisfactory look. The student imagined he knew as much about such subjects as his professor.

Early need of poetic expression.

We have seen that even in Goethe's childhood he composed tales, didactic dialogues, and even tragedies and romances. His nature imperatively demanded expression. From the time he was old enough to hold a pen, he felt the need to report his inner life — to give it some palpable shape and existence. All the incidents and objects which came within his observation impressed themselves upon his memory, and he reproduced these images, not with mechanical accuracy, but warmly tinged and modified by his own vigorous individuality. There is no period of his life which he has not thus chronicled. The productions which have been preserved from his sojourn in Leipsic bear the impress of the French taste which was then prevailing in Saxony, and from which he had not yet emancipated himself. The genius of Gottsched, although heartily ridiculed by the young Hercules, nevertheless compelled his muse to move with the dainty courtesy and artificial grace imported from the Trianon.

"The Accomplices."

His comedy, "The Accomplices" ("Die Mitschuldigen"), though quite German in its occasional roughness, is written in Alexandrines, and teaches a morality quite *à la* Maintenon and Pompadour. A series of lyric poems, also belonging to this period, reminds one of the French rococo both in sentiment and in treatment.

Lyrical poems in French taste.

They were the author's first public venture, and appeared in a volume as texts for musical compositions. They fell flat on the market, and even Goethe's nearest friends could give them only a very qualified approval.

About three years after his arrival in Leipsic (August, 1768) he started homeward, sick and discontented. His

father, who had hoped to see him return an accomplished jurist, found his progress in legal lore far from satisfactory, and probably judged his attainments in other departments of knowledge by this standard. The next eight months he spent in Frankfort, trying to regain his health, and in April, 1770, went to continue his studies at the University of Strasburg. He was then in his twenty-first year.

Return to Frankfort.

II.

ON his arrival in Strasburg the horizon of Goethe's life was suddenly widened. The city was then essentially German, as in point of character and general appearance it must always remain. The French and the Teuton society were tolerably distinct, but the two elements ran side by side in friendly parallelism. Goethe, with his usual freedom from national prejudice, studied both with equal partiality; he drank deep draughts from the animated existence which moved about him, and was delighted with all he saw. In a letter to a friend he compares his life at that time to a sleigh-ride, with its merry jingling of bells and its swiftly appearing and vanishing visions. The chapters of his autobiography devoted to Strasburg and his acquaintance with the parson's family at Sesenheim show how important this period was for his artistic development, and how fondly in his later years he lingered over the memory of it.

Arrival in Strasburg.

Among his first acquaintances in the city was Jung Stilling, a Swedenborgian and mystic philosopher, who was his fellow-boarder in the dining-club of the Misses Lauth. He describes Goethe as a young man "with large, clear eyes, splendid forehead, and a beautiful figure." Stilling, being a poor man, and a *homo novus*, was the butt of the witticisms of the other boarders, until on one occasion Goethe somewhat vehemently took his part and thereby gained a life-long friend and admirer.

Jung Stilling.

But incomparably the greatest event of Goethe's life in Strasburg was his meeting with Herder. He had never before encountered a man whom he had recognized as his own superior; and although the pos-

Meeting with Herder.

sibilities of Herder's nature were more limited than those of Goethe's, he had at that time reached an intellectual maturity which commanded respect. Moreover, he was an author whose fame had received a fresh impetus by the publication of a book with the singular title, "Critical Forests" ("Die Kritischen Wälder"). Circumstances, which throughout his life persisted in playing pranks upon him, had made him a clergyman, while Nature, who knew him better, had destined him for a man of letters.

Herder's critical method as compared to that of Lessing.

As a critic his influence upon German literature is only second to that of Lessing; and if his name is not heard as frequently at the present day as that of his great predecessor, it is owing rather to the obscurity and luxuriant intricacy of his language than to poverty of thought. "Lessing," says Hermann Grimm,[1] "knew only one kind of tactics, viz., to charge upon his opponent with fixed bayonet. He takes no prisoners: when his labor is finished, then his opponent, too, is finished. Herder, on the contrary, makes no attack. Pressing in upon his adversary from all sides with his thoughts, he tries to induce him to retreat. He is inexhaustible in his resources."

Herder completes the rupture between Goethe and the French school.

At the time of his meeting with Goethe, Herder had already a definite poetic creed of his own. The breadth of his vision and the spacious hospitality of his intellect made a profound impression upon the young student. The shallowness and weakness of the prevailing school he had long suspected, but he had had no sufficient reason to break with it as long as he knew of nothing better to take its place. Here the many-sided culture and positive opinions of the maturer man came to his rescue. Herder became his intellectual liberator. With the keen irony and oracular sententiousness which always characterized his utterances, he dem-

[1] *Goethe: Vorlesungen gehalten an der Königlichen Universität zu Berlin*, pp. 532–554. Von Hermann Grimm. Berlin, 1877.

onstrated the untruthfulness and unnaturalness of the so-called polite literature of the day, and opened to his delighted pupil a rich perspective of natural wealth in Homer, in Shakspere, and in the folk-poetry of all nations. He led him out of a splendidly upholstered and artificially lighted hall into the great, calm presence of Nature herself. The scales suddenly fell from Goethe's eyes, and he saw that he had been blind. Henceforth the poetic opulence of his mind, which had hitherto lain congealed in the chilly atmosphere of a literary rococo age, is made to flow, and erelong it bursts forth in warm, impetuous currents. Here the idea of "Faust" is first conceived; all kinds of poetic projects throng his brain, and with the heedless spontaneity of an improvisatore he pours forth his long-imprisoned emotions in a series of charmingly simple, life-like, and warm-blooded lyrics. He begins to renew his acquaintance with Homer, and the Iliad impresses him as a new revelation. "All the heroes," says Herder, two years later, in a letter to Merck, "became with him beautiful and great and free. I always seem to see him whenever I come to a really fine passage where old father Homer is looking up over his lyre, smiling in his venerable beard."

Herder stimulates Goethe to poetic activity.

In a eulogy on Shakspere, delivered before a local literary society, he attacks Racine and Corneille with youthful vehemence and iconoclastic zeal, exalting at their expense the English bard, to whom he expresses his deep indebtedness because he has, as he says, widened his own existence into an infinity. "Voltaire," he continues farther on, "who made a business of reviling majesties, has here also proved himself a genuine Thersites; if I were Ulysses I should belabor his back with my sceptre. Most of these gentlemen take offense at his [Shakspere's] characters. But I cry, Nature! nature! nothing more in accordance with nature than Shakspere's men and women! He rivaled Prometheus; copied his men, feature by feature, only in colossal size. In this lies the

Eulogy on Shakspere.

secret reason why we recognize them as our brethren. And then he animated them with the breath of his own soul; he himself speaks out of all of them, and we recognize their kinship to us. And how can this century presume to judge of nature? How should we know her, we who from our youth up have seen every one of our own feelings and those of others laced and ornamented? I am ashamed of myself in Shakspere's presence; for often it happens that at first sight I think that I should have done differently, but afterwards I have to acknowledge that I am a poor blunderer, that in Shakspere Nature is uttering her own oracles, and that my men are soap-bubbles inflated by romantic caprices."

The significance of the eulogy.

This subjective tone is retained through the whole oration. There is no attempt to demonstrate Shakspere's greatness; the speaker merely gives his own word for it that he is great, and supports his assertion with a good deal of emphatic and passionate rhetoric. The charm of this eulogy is in its youthfulness — the generous ardor of a recent convert; moreover, it reveals the germs of thoughts which slowly ripened and many years later attained their full growth. Especially the following sentence is significant as foreshadowing the central idea of "Faust:" "What noble philosophers have said of the world is also true of Shakspere, *that that which we call evil is only the reverse side of good*, and is as necessary to its existence and to the *tout ensemble* as it is that the hot zone must burn and Lapland must freeze in order that there may be a temperate zone."

Memorial of Erwin von Steinbach.

How fearlessly and intelligently Goethe used his eyes now that he had learned to believe in the reliability of his own vision may be seen from his memorial of Erwin von Steinbach, the architect of the Strasburg Cathedral. Here he courageously praises the Gothic architecture in defiance of the prevailing taste, which pronounced it a grotesque relic of mediæval barbarism.

"Everything," he says, "even to the smallest fibril, is here formed as in the eternal works of Nature. How lightly the vast structure rises from its firm foundation into the air, how frail is everything, and still for eternity!" These are trite sentiments now; but in 1770 they appeared startlingly bold and heretical. This dithyrambic little treatise, which the author in his Greek period esteemed very lightly, nevertheless gave one of the first impulses toward that revival of Gothic art which has enabled the Germans to preserve and restore intelligently, instead of destroying, as they formerly did, their most precious monuments of mediæval civilization. In direct opposition to the teachings of Lessing and Winckelmann, who had maintained that the Greeks had in their sculpture, architecture, and literature represented the universally human ideal, he asserts that that is only true art which is characteristic. The genius of art, he continues, cannot rise on borrowed wings, were it even those of the dawn; he must unfold the native strength that is in him, he must work out the confused dreams of the national childhood and youth into beauty and clearness. Then the results will be true and genuine, and as such will take care of their own immortality. In accordance with this principle, he exalts the truly Germanic stiffness and *naïveté* of Albrecht Dürer, contrasting him with the powdered elegance and daintiness of the painters of the French school.

Praise of Gothic architecture.

Goethe insists upon nationality in art.

Goethe's present interest in literary and artistic subjects did not prevent him, however, from plunging headlong, as had always been his wont, into the thick of human existence. Already as a boy in Frankfort he had had an innocent little romance with a girl named Gretchen, who was by several years his senior, and, moreover, socially his inferior. In Leipsic he had imagined himself suffering from an unrequited love for Kätchen Schönkopf, the daughter of his landlord, who had persisted in

Early love episodes.

turning his devotion into ridicule. Soon after his arrival in Strasburg he had enkindled a hopeless passion in the hearts of both the daughters of his French dancing-master, and during a violent and somewhat embarrassing scene, in which the elder had directly and the younger inferentially declared her love for him, the former had kissed him and solemnly pronounced a curse upon the next maiden who should kiss his lips after her. This curse, if the tale of Sesenheim in the autobiography is to be literally interpreted, did not fail of its effect.

The dancing-master's daughters.

In the autumn of 1770 Goethe had been introduced by a fellow-student, Weyland, to the family of the clergyman Brion, who lived at Sesenheim in Elsass, about six hours' journey from Strasburg. They were plain, God-fearing people, who lived in contented rural obscurity, and knew very little about the great world which moved beyond the horizon of their own home. The father was a parson of the old school, in whom the very absence of intellectual brilliancy seems a kind of patriarchal virtue, a man of venerable aspect, with much homely common sense, leisurely and conscientious in the performance of his agricultural and clerical duties. Somehow, after reading Goethe's brief description of him, I always imagine him in his domestic dishabille of dressing-gown and slippers. The elder daughter, whom Goethe christens Lucinde, is a wholesome, buxom girl, who comes bursting into the room and departs in the same energetic fashion; the younger, Friederike, is gentler, possesses a few artless accomplishments, and with all her rural grace and simplicity is quite lady-like in her demeanor. Her future lover draws her picture with a delightful, lover-like minuteness. Her frank and merry blue eyes, her piquant little nose, her lithe and slender figure, the massive blonde braids dangling down over her back, and every little detail of costume which went to complete

Visit to Sesenheim.

Parson Brion.

Friederike Brion.

the image of her sweet self, are described with a delicate precision, and, I cannot help thinking, with a shade of affectionate regret. The memory of what she had been to him and how the higher destiny of his life had driven him away from her makes him anxious to do her full justice, or, as Grimm thinks, more than justice. However that may be, the absolute realism of the picture is so convincing that no one can help believing her as charming and guileless and beautiful as she presented herself to her lover's fancy. If Goethe has, as is not unlikely, by the vividness and artistic skill with which he has drawn her portrait, purposely wronged himself, making his desertion of her appear absolutely unpardonable, it shows a generosity on his part for which no biographer has yet given him full credit.

Is Goethe's picture of her a faithful likeness?

The following passage in the autobiography I cannot refrain from translating: "She [Friederike] played several things with some dexterity in the fashion one is accustomed to hear in the country, and upon a piano which the schoolmaster was long ago to have tuned, if he had only had the time to do it. Now she was to sing a song, a certain tenderly melancholy one; but that went all wrong. She arose smiling, or rather with that expression of cheerful merriment which was always resting on her countenance. 'If I sing badly,' she said, 'I cannot blame the piano and the schoolmaster for it; let us rather go out; and then you shall hear some of my Elsass and Swiss songs; they sound much better.'"

Friederike's music.

And out they went. In the evening they took a long moonlight walk together, and Friederike's innocent prattle delighted him immeasurably. Her talk was of the most practical kind; about the neighbors, the country, and the state of the crops; nothing moonshiny, not a vestige of sentiment. The next day he went back to Strasburg; but the image of Friederike haunted him. He returned to Sesenheim, and during the winter and the

Goethe's love for her.

following spring his visits were frequent. When at length he declared his love for her, he well knew that her heart had already long been his. A number of beautiful lyrics, fresh and unpremeditated as the lyrical outbursts of the birds in spring, bear witness to the ardor and sincerity of his affection. Then Friederike and her sister came to visit friends in Strasburg; and Friederike's lover had, of course, to be in attendance. Now he suddenly discovered the difference between himself and her. Torn out of the idyllic frame in which he had been wont to see her, her rural innocence and simplicity seemed no longer so wholly adorable. Half involuntarily he began to draw comparisons between her and the more accomplished ladies of his city acquaintance. With many regrets, scruples, and violent self-accusations he saw himself slowly drifting away from her. His love had sprung forth and blossomed spontaneously as a bud when touched by the sunshine. Now it began to fade, and no amount of artificial reasoning could keep it alive.

Friederike in Strasburg.

He perceived clearly that with the lack of common interests, and the great intellectual distance which separated him from her, a marriage with her would cripple his growth and unfit him for the great work which lay before him. Neither could she find happiness in a union with a man whose higher intellectual life she could not share. The conclusion was inevitable: he must leave her. And is he then to be so harshly judged, because in the overflowing ardor of youthful feeling he did not prudently weigh the *pros* and *cons* before he accepted the love which he knew well enough was only waiting for his acceptance? It is not an unusual experience for men to outgrow the love which they have fervidly and sincerely solicited; but the fidelity which clings only to the external promise, regardless of the inner conditions which alone can give it reality, is surely more disastrous in its results than that which the world brands as faithlessness.

Lack of common interests.

Friederike always remained unmarried. Eight years after his final departure from Strasburg (1779), Goethe, then a world-renowned man, revisited Sesenheim and found the family still there. Everything seemed unchanged. Friederike led him to the arbor where they had so often sat together, and talked with him, as of old, about the neighbors, and what a vivid recollection they all had of him, of his youthful pranks and the songs he had taught them. One neighbor, in whose mental improvement Goethe had once interested himself, was called up to testify that it was only eight days since he had asked for him; another, the barber, was also summoned and gave similar testimony. All he had said and done was as fresh in their memory as if it were but yesterday that he had left them. And it makes this little idyl doubly pathetic to know that Friederike made not the faintest allusion to the relation which had once existed between them; only in the remotest way she touched upon the severe illness which had prostrated her after his leaving her, and which, as he knew from others, came near costing her her life. Although frank and friendly as ever, she somehow seemed paler and more subdued. The old people, too, were cordial, and found that he had grown younger. "I remained overnight," Goethe says in a letter of September 28th to Frau von Stein,[1] from which the above facts are taken, and "parted the next morning at sunrise from friendly faces, so that I may now again think with contentment of this little corner of the world, and live in peace with the spirits of these people, who are now reconciled to me."

Goethe's visit to Sesenheim in 1779.

How Friederike received him.

Friederike, who had never been strong, having always had a tendency to consumption, died in 1813.

August 6, 1771, Goethe obtained the degree of licentiate, not doctor, of law. His thesis and dissertation, although written in excellent Latin, and in all respects very creditable performances, did not

Goethe obtains the degree of licentiate of law.

[1] *Goethe's Briefe an Frau v. Stein.* Vol. i., p. 245. Weimar, 1857.

display the minute knowledge of legal points which the faculty demanded, and were, moreover, strongly tinctured with the sentiments of Rousseau. The old father in Frankfort, who had expected his son to make his *début* with a respectable *opus*, could not conceal his disappointment. After his graduation the young doctor (his title by courtesy) returned home, and was immediately admitted to the bar in his native city.

Returns to Frankfort.

III.

MANY passages in Goethe's correspondence and in his lyrics prove that long after his departure from Strasburg the thought of Friederike pursued him. His mind was torn by a tragic conflict; he violently condemned his own conduct, and still could do nothing to amend it. A heart-rending letter which he received from her still further aggravated his grief and his remorse. It is in this mood of despondency and helpless regret that, shortly after his return home, he writes to his friend Salzmann, "What I am doing amounts to nothing! As usual, more thought than accomplished; therefore I shall probably never amount to much."

Remorse at the thought of Friederike.

But it was not in his nature to remain long inactive; his was too healthy a mind to be permanently crippled by grief. He must soon regain his equilibrium. When his sorrow has spent its first vehemence, it is under his control; it becomes an active, stimulating force, which rouses his slumbering energies. All that is accidental and weakly individual in it vanishes, and it demands a high and universally human expression.

Renewed activity.

In the tragedy "Götz von Berlichingen," which was written during this period, this problem of faithlessness is incidentally treated. Weisslingen, during the monotony of his captivity, falls in love with Götz's sister Marie, and, when he regains his liberty, deserts her. In "Clavigo" the same idea returns, and this time as the central problem; and in many shorter poems similar situations occur.

Faithlessness as a literary *motif*.

We have seen how Goethe's discovery of Shakspere had

wrought a kind of intellectual metamorphosis in him. He had learned to disregard the Aristotelian unities of time, place, and action, and to respect no other laws than nature's own. The poetic powers which had long been struggling in his soul could now freely assert themselves. Among the many projects which already in Strasburg had been agitating his mind was that of dramatizing the history of the mediæval German knight, Götz von Berlichingen. The autobiography of this sturdy old robber, in honest simplicity, straightforwardness, and absence of cant only comparable to Joinville's "History of St. Louis," is a genuine product of nature, and must have been a precious find to a poet who was fighting to establish the rights of nature within the domain of literature.

The autobiography of Götz von Berlichingen.

The tragedy of "Götz" is a glorification of the club-law. It represents the will and honest conviction of the individual in conflict with the laws of the state. Götz, firmly convinced of his own rights, combats emperor, prelates, and princes, and in the end is worsted; and the poet takes pains to show us in every line that his sympathy is with the law-breaker. He depicts the miserable intrigues, the pettiness, and the avarice of the bishop and his adherents, and he introduces Götz as the champion of the oppressed people, an heroic marauder, who in defending his own rights also maintains an inviolable principle. He sees, to quote an excellent authority,[1] "in the age of Maximilian not the violent struggle of the departing Middle Ages with the spirit of the mightily advancing modern history, but only the decay of poetic freshness and liberty, the fading of the old imperial glory, the degradation of the brave and proudly independent knighthood into the dastardly servility of an eye-serving court-nobility, the triumph of shallow

"Götz von Berlichingen," Goethe's earliest tragedy.

A glorification of the club-law.

[1] *Goethe und Schiller.* Von Hermann Hettner. Dritte Auflage. Braunschweig, 1876. Erster Band, p. 146.

meanness. The first manuscript was therefore inscribed with the motto from Haller's 'Usong,' 'The misfortune has happened; the heart of the people is trodden in the dust, and no more capable of noble aspiration.'"

Characterization of Götz.

The characterization of the hero is masterly — no mere crude and glaring profile-drawing, but a finely-shaded picture gradually asserting itself in the most exquisite relief. Bold and self-confident and still generously unsuspicious and simple as a child, equally ready to resent and to forgive, hot-blooded, proud, and obstinate, he is the embodiment of all that is noblest and best in his age, as fine and genuine a type of mediæval manhood as ever appeared in reality or in fiction. There is not a taint of meanness in his whole gigantic being.

Weisslingen.

And in sharp contrast to him stands the weak and vacillating Weisslingen, a handsome and courtly gentleman, an admirer of the ladies and admired by them, a singular but very human mixture of base and lovable traits. For a poet of twenty-three it is no small achievement to have conceived and consistently depicted a character like Weisslingen. Goethe's villains are drawn with the same delicate and faithful workmanship as his heroes. Weisslingen is not a rogue of the black and sinister type, who goes about darkly rolling his eyes and coolly plotting destruction, but an amiable, pleasant-mannered, and impressible fellow, who simply lacks the strength to act honorably when temporary advantage and pleasure make a compromise with honor the more agreeable course. He is fertile in resources and always finds plausible reasons for following his momentary inclinations. The influence of the frank and honorable Götz strengthens the better side of his nature, and he too is frank and honorable; in the company of the wily bishop and the worldly and fascinating Adelhaid, he becomes selfish and calculating, and, though not without a struggle, surrenders faith and honor, breaks his word, and plots treason against his dearest friend.

Goethe's villains are complex characters.

The tragic element in Götz's fate lies in the fact that with all his uprightness and manly vigor he is really an obstacle to advancing civilization, and as advancing civilization is stronger than he, he must either surrender or perish. Being as he is, he cannot do the former, and accordingly he does the latter. Out of the chaotic elements of mediæval feudalism the new state is just forming, but not yet formed. The gradually developing new order of things demands the subordination of individual interests to those of the state; but Götz, born and bred under the old system, accustomed to help himself with his good sword, despises legal pettifogging and the slow recourse to imperial arbitration. He honors the emperor as a man, and would never willingly offend him; he recognizes him, too, in the abstract, as his feudal lord and master, but that does not prevent him from using his own sound judgment in defiance of the authority of the state, where he is satisfied that the right is on his side. He therefore with the very best of motives fights the imperial troops as long as he has yet a man left who is ready to stand by him. And when finally he is vanquished, it is not in a fair and open fight, but by a breach of faith on the part of his conquerors, which again aggravates his feeling of injustice and makes him ready to avenge his wrong as soon as his hand is free. A most delightful glimpse into Götz's character is afforded by the scene in the court-house at Heilbronn, where, as a captive, he goes to meet the imperial counselors. His good wife Elizabeth, who knows his hot temper and disrespectful manners, urges him to be mild and gentle, as he has just been expressing his unfeigned contempt for his judges.

The tragic element in Götz's fate.

Götz resists the imperial authority.

Götz in the court-house at Heilbronn.

"Rid yourself of these thoughts," she tenderly coaxes him. "Remember that you are to appear before the counselors. You are not in a frame of mind to treat them civilly, and I fear the worst."

And her fears are only too well founded. Götz enters the court hall, doubtless with the very best intentions to behave properly, but the legal quibbling, and especially the form in which the document which he is to sign is drawn up, rouses his indignation, and with his iron hand he strikes down one of the men who are ordered to seize him. He then wrests the sword from the grasp of another, and dares the court and the whole city to approach him at their own risk.

"Whoever is not an Hungarian bull, let him not come too near me! He will get a slap of my iron right hand which will thoroughly cure him of headache, toothache, and all other earthly woes. . . . . Come along, come along! I should be pleased to make the acquaintance of the bravest one among you."

Arrival of Sickingen's troopers.

At this moment his brother-in-law, Franz von Sickingen, a brave and honest knight like himself, enters the city with his troopers, and takes possession of the court-house, whereupon Götz and he dictate their own terms. The emperor, who cannot help liking the blunt old fellow, and who honors his uprightness and valor, accepts his propositions and restores to him his lost possessions, on the condition that he shall henceforth keep quiet, and no more lift his sword except at imperial command.

Götz writing his autobiography.

Götz obeys for a while; and in his enforced leisure he writes, with many angry pauses and interspersed comments addressed to his faithful wife, who is sitting at his side, an account of his life and his deeds. Every word he puts down opens the flood-gate of memory and awakes the yearning for renewed action. "Writing," he bursts forth, "is only busy idleness. It is a sour occupation. While I am writing what I have done, I am only exasperated at the loss of the time in which I might be doing something."

Very beautiful is the tender solicitude of the wife, as with

many innocent artifices she urges him to continue. This great, blunt, simple-minded man, sitting there like a schoolboy, chewing his pen, awkwardly fashioning his artless thoughts, and every now and then bursting into violent tirades at the recollection of the injustice which he is hungering to avenge; and then the quiet, affectionate wife, with her sweet, matronly face, coaxing and urging him on, soothing his wounded honor, and prompting his lagging memory, — what an exquisite picture!

Then the rebellion of the peasants breaks out. Götz, very much against his will, is induced to become their leader, hoping thereby to prevent them from committing further excesses. Now he has for the first time, although from an honorable motive, broken his knightly promise and is openly identified with law-breakers and the enemies of the realm. The tragic necessity which by slow degrees develops the honorable man, who from an excessive consciousness of his own rights violates those of others, into a malefactor and a criminal before the secular law, is here traced with a fine psychological insight and with admirable dramatic skill. Götz fails to curb the violence of the rebels, and as their leader he is responsible for their crimes. He is hunted down, captured, and dies broken-hearted in the garden before his prison. His last solicitude is for his faithful squire, George, who has fought at his side and whose fate is yet unknown to him. His last words are, "Liberty, liberty!"

Götz becomes the leader of the rebellious peasants.

The poet evidently, in spite of his better judgment, wishes to make us believe that Götz dies miserably, not as the victim of his own resistance to orderly progress, not because the necessity of his own character must inevitably lead to a tragic result, but as the martyr of a righteous cause. And in order to emphasize this impression he makes Götz's sister Marie exclaim, "Noble man! Noble man! Woe to the century which thrust thee away!" And the squire, Lerse, adds, "Woe to posterity if it misjudge thee."

The poet represents Götz's death as a martyrdom.

Judged as a drama, "Götz von Berlichingen" violates almost every dramatic rule that has ever been invented. The scene is perpetually changing, characters appear and disappear, obeying no other law than the sovereign will of the author, and there is no perceptible attempt to intensify and accelerate the action toward the close. The end is perhaps a little weak — pathetic rather than tragic. Goethe, too, felt these deficiencies, and remodeled and curtailed his work for representation on the stage. But for all that the tragedy, as it first appeared, made an epoch in the history of the German drama. What a tremendous figure was this burly, iron-handed Götz in a century of delicate rococo sentiments, a century with powdered locks and padded calves and silk stockings! Whatever might be the technical defects of the work, here was at least a man whose speech was as free as the sunlight and as universally intelligible, and whose thought had that vigorous rhythm which sets the heart in motion. Immediately the poetic value of the Middle Ages was discovered, and the press for some years continued to pour forth an unceasing current of chivalrous dramas and romances. Hitherto patriotic enthusiasts had been wont to seek the true spirit of Teutonism, after the manner of Lohenstein, Schönaich, and Klopstock, in the age of Arminius and Thusnelda. The Middle Ages had been looked upon with disfavor, as a period of steady decline from the heroic strength and simplicity of the ancient Teutonic times. Now the glory of feudalism, with its pomp and gayety and its splendid virtues and vices, was celebrated in prose and song; a new and almost untrodden region of German history was opened and made available for the national literature.

Defects of the tragedy of "Götz."

The effect of "Götz" upon the German drama.

IV.

IN the spring of 1774, a little more than a year after the publication of "Götz," the tragedy "Clavigo" appeared. The first impression it produced was one of general disappointment. Even Goethe's best friends could find no excuse, or only an excuse, for such a sudden lapse from the heroic height which he had attained in "Götz." Why did he not continue to work the rich mine which he had himself discovered? But a *da capo* performance, which is merely a response to the clamor of the public, and never a primal inspiration, was unworthy of a genius of Goethe's originality and force. He was gratified at his success, but he did not care to repeat it. It was the inner problems of his own life which demanded a poetic expression, and he chose for each the form which was in most perfect accord with its character; but the form itself had to him no intrinsic value, and he threw it away as a useless vessel as soon as it had served its purpose.

"Clavigo."

Disappointment of Goethe's friends.

Underneath all the incongruous and trivial details of life there is always a vital principle reposing, and as soon as you have grasped and expressed this principle, the distressing details have lost their power to harass and torment you. Thus the very name of Friederike suggested to Goethe's mind a multitude of distressing memories, which were a perpetual torment. He tried forcibly to shun them, but they ever persisted in returning. It was only by grasping and fearlessly expressing the tragic problem of which they were the manifestations, that he could hope to master them and reduce them to per-

The tragic problem in "Clavigo."

manent subjection. It was this which he did in the tragedy of "Clavigo." But because the problem itself is one which perhaps has little reality to the majority of mankind, it was but natural that the tragedy should fail to impress the great mass of the public. "If you love a woman well enough to be continually grieved and worried at the thought of her," the average Philistine would say, "why not then go back and marry her? then there would be an end of it." That the cure, in such a case, would be more fatal than the disease would occur only to such as dwell on the higher plane of being where marriage is not a mere physical union, but an intimate copartnership of thought and life.

Memoirs of Beaumarchais.

The skeleton of the plot for his tragedy Goethe took from the memoirs of Beaumarchais, which he elaborated and remodeled to suit his own purpose. The intention of Beaumarchais was merely to justify his own conduct; he therefore paints Clavigo in the blackest colors as a heartless and frivolous villain. Goethe's interest centres in the character of this seeming villain, whom, like Weisslingen in "Götz," he represents as a frank, agreeable, and naturally generous fellow, who is led by circumstances and by his own weakness to commit a dishonorable act. Clavigo is a young Spaniard from the colonies, who arrives as an obscure adventurer, without fortune or influential connections, in the Spanish capital. He is kindly received in the family of a well-to-do merchant, and by his wit and pleasant manners succeeds in winning the affections of his host's sister-in-law, Marie Beaumarchais. He founds a paper, makes a brilliant *début* as a man of letters, rises rapidly to fortune and honor, and becomes the archivist of the king. His intellectual growth is stimulated, he gains a wider knowledge of life, and soon wakes up to the discovery that his ideals have changed, that his youthful and unambitious love no longer satisfies the higher demands of his nature. In addition to this a number of worldly and less laudable motives, artfully

Clavigo and Marie Beaumarchais.

strengthened and emphasized by his cold and unscrupulous friend Carlos, assert themselves, and the result is that without any formal rupture he basely deserts the maiden to whom he had pledged his troth. The latter's brother, Beaumarchais, succeeds by strategy in making him sign a paper in which he declares his own guilt and the innocence of his former betrothed. In a fit of generous regret he hastens back to Marie, obtains her forgiveness, and the compromising document is destroyed. But, for all that, he feels more keenly than ever how far he is removed from her, and he is restless and unhappy. On his return home he confesses to Carlos what has happened, and at his instigation again breaks his word. In order to shield himself against the brother's vengeance he resorts to intrigues and treason. Marie dies heart-broken. Before the door of the house Clavigo accidentally meets the men who keep watch over her body in the night; remorse and sorrow overwhelm him; heedless of his own safety he throws himself down before the coffin, calling despairingly her name. Beaumarchais enters; they fight, and Clavigo falls dead, pierced to the heart by the avenger's sword.

Clavigo deserts Marie.

Death of Marie.

Death of Clavigo.

The plot, as will be readily seen, is in no wise remarkable; but the characterization of Clavigo himself, and especially the exposition of the motives and counter-motives with which he excuses and again condemns his own actions, betray as usual a psychological insight on the author's part of which his friends surely had no reason to be ashamed. When he draws on his own experience he is always powerful. Moreover, as regards the dramatic form "Clavigo" is a great advance on "Götz." The author has here no desire to palliate his hero's crime. The tragic *dénouement* is neither occasioned nor hastened by intrigues from without, but appears as the necessary expiation of the misdeed — as the logical result of the weakness and perpetual vacillation between

"Clavigo" a tragedy of character, not of intrigue.

good and evil which constitute the essence of Clavigo's character. Nevertheless, though we feel the justice of his punishment, we see readily enough all that might be urged in his favor, and our sympathy rarely deserts him. There are moments, however, when the mere external considerations of prudence so far predominate over the psychological reasons as to suggest the idea, that if it had not been for the former he would never have discovered the latter.

Goethe's removal to Wetzlar, May, 1772.

After having in a leisurely fashion practiced law in Frankfort for about nine months, Goethe moved in May, 1772, to Wetzlar, where he was admitted as a practitioner at the Imperial Chamber of Justice. The Counselor Goethe, dignified old Philistine as he was, saw with increasing disquietude how his son's literary pursuits absorbed his attention, while the law remained an affair of mere secondary importance. He was naturally anxious to reverse this relation, but had learned by this time to refrain from any forcible interference with the young man's tastes. He only strove in every way to further his progress in the law, looked up his authorities for him, and assisted him with his advice; but he laid no hindrance in the way of his literary development. In removing to Wetzlar, Goethe no doubt yielded to his father's wish; for a young jurist could, probably, nowhere have a finer opportunity for familiarizing himself with the intricacy of legal procedure than at the Imperial Chamber of Justice. If, however, the old gentleman could have foreseen what a rich harvest this removal was to bring to literature, and how little the law was to profit by it, he would probably have thought twice before recommending it.

The Counselor Goethe's relation to his son.

Shortly after his arrival in the town Goethe made the acquaintance of the family of the magistrate Buff, whose house before long became a second home to him. The eldest daughter, Lotte, was understood to be virtually engaged to a young jurist

Charlotte Buff engaged to the jurist Kestner.

named Kestner, a cautious, dry, but scrupulously upright and honorable man, in whose friendship Goethe soon thoroughly established himself. Kestner was not a man to form hasty judgments of anybody; he first pronounces Goethe to be a man of no light weight, then he is impressed by his talents, next he discovers that he has a vigorous imagination and expresses himself in very original metaphors and paradoxes, and at last he is sure that he is a man of character and a great genius. Similar testimony we have from almost every one who had the good fortune to know the poet in his youth. A more magnificent phenomenon in a human shape, Germany, or I might say the whole modern world, had scarcely ever seen. He was rather tall of stature and superbly formed; had a fine head covered with an abundance of brown hair which he wore unpowdered, tied together with a ribbon behind, large, lustrous brown eyes, a massive, thoughtful brow, a well-chiseled mouth and chin, and a slightly aquiline nose. His head and countenance, although of a Germanic type, had that sculpturesque distinctness and beauty which we are apt to call Greek. His dress, which was always neat and sometimes a little striking, had that same air of unconscious distinction which belonged to his whole personality, and in his manner there was a frank, reckless grace which drew all hearts irresistibly towards him. "Oh my brother," writes the elderly Wieland a few years later (although he surely had no reason to be prepossessed in Goethe's favor) to his friend Jacobi, "what shall I say to you? How completely the man at first sight won my heart! How I fell in love with the glorious youth when, on this very day, I sat at his side at the dinner-table!" And again to Merck: "Goethe lives and rules and makes rain and sunshine, *tour-à-tour comme vous savez*, and makes us happy whatever he does."

Goethe's personal appearance.

His dress and bearing.

But to return to Wetzlar. Goethe first met Charlotte Buff at a ball, which is charmingly described in "Werther."

Her frank blue eyes, her cheerfulness, her artless enthusiasm for all that was beautiful, her merry good-humor, and the unstudied grace of her motions attracted him powerfully. He danced and chatted with her, and surrendered himself to the delight of being in her company, as if no *fiancée* had ever existed. And although he already knew Kestner, he was probably at the time not aware of the relation which existed between him and Lotte. The next day he called on the young lady and saw her in her domestic sphere, surrounded by her many brothers and sisters, cheerful and natural as ever, — the very type of the German girl who unites sentiment with practical sense, and refinement and grace with housewifely skill. Goethe was completely captivated, and, what was more, he bounded with one leap into the affection of the whole family. He returned daily, romped with the children, gathered them about him in corners and improvised fairy-tales to them *ad infinitum*, and to Lotte he confided his literary ambition and found in her an eager and sympathetic listener. For Lotte had a latent but very warm vein of sentiment in her, which probably refused to flow in the presence of her practical and unsentimental betrothed. It would have been a miracle if she had not soon discovered the contrast between the sober and rather business-like devotion of Kestner and the magnificent sweep and fervor of Goethe's thought. She could not but catch many a deep glimpse of all the rich wonders that dwelt within him, and it would not have been natural if she had met with coldness a homage which must have been sweet to her warm and imaginative nature. Goethe's worship, though unuttered in words, was yet ardent, sincere, and spontaneous; with youthful heedlessness he allowed himself to drift on, hardly caring what the result would be. So far from shunning Kestner he drew him ever more closely toward himself; when he arrived in the evening and the betrothed couple sat together before the door in

Goethe's first meeting with Lotte.

Lotte becomes interested in Goethe.

the garden, he would with a charming unceremoniousness throw himself down at Lotte's feet and give free rein to his fancy, and they would both share with equal delight the frank interchange of ideas which then followed. Kestner probably felt so safe in the possession of his Lotte's love that it hardly occurred to him to be jealous; for, singular as it may appear, the documents preserved from that period seem to indicate that he took no offense at the intimacy between Goethe and his betrothed. Very likely, when he could no longer close his eyes to the fact that his friend loved Lotte, he regarded him from his own secure position with sympathetic compassion, but trusted too implicitly in his honor to aggravate his misery by an unnecessary interference on his part. However that may be, the relation between Goethe and Lotte at last reached a crisis; Goethe suddenly left Wetzlar, wrote several despairing letters, and the final result was — "Werther."

Growing intimacy.

A sudden crisis.

The reason for this precipitous departure has been variously interpreted by the various biographers. Only the last, Hermann Grimm, has given anything like a satisfactory explanation of it, and I shall follow his account, without quoting the many documents which he has with much ingenuity and tact gathered together and interpreted in his excellent "Lectures on Goethe," published during the present year.[1] Goethe's own account of the affair in his autobiography is necessarily very incomplete; Lotte was then yet alive and the whole story could not be told. And no one will dispute his right, out of regard for her, to conceal as much or as little as he chose.

Goethe's precipitous departure from Wetzlar explained.

According to Grimm, then, Goethe sits one evening at Lotte's feet, playing with the flounces on her dress, and Kestner sits on a chair at her side; they talk with animation, until something is said which suddenly agitates

[1] 1877.

Goethe powerfully. He goes home, feeling that he has been sleeping on a volcano. He packs his trunks, sends an enigmatical note to Kestner, inclosing one to Lotte, and leaves post-haste for Frankfort. From a letter to Kestner, written some seven months later, it is easy to infer what caused his sudden departure. He discovered that Lotte returned his love; the glorious night and his imaginative conversation had tuned her into an exalted mood, in which, ere she knew what she had said, she had betrayed her secret. They had been talking about separations, and Goethe, referring to a brief journey he was about to undertake, made some allusion to "the beyond," meaning the region beyond the mountains which he was to cross. Lotte, in sublime unconsciousness of his meaning, thinks that he is speaking of an eternal separation, and very innocently replies that she supposes she could renounce him for this life, if she were only certain that they were to meet in the next. The tones perhaps more than the words themselves revealed to Goethe what thoughts Lotte had been cherishing. If Kestner should make the same discovery, he would very likely be generous enough to retire in Goethe's favor. But was Goethe ready to accept such a sacrifice? Could he, like Kestner, love her with that constant, unvarying devotion which she deserved and would naturally demand? He feared to subject his wayward heart to so severe a test. If he remained a day longer in Wetzlar, however, how could he associate with Lotte on the same secure and friendly footing as before? An explanation or development of some kind would be sure to follow, and their pleasant relation might be hopelessly destroyed. His only escape seemed to be in flight. The result showed that he acted wisely. Kestner and Lotte were soon married, and cherished throughout their lives a most cordial regard for Goethe. Their friendship suffered a temporary interruption by the publication of "Werther," but was soon renewed and strengthened by a frequent ex-

He discovers that Lotte returns his affection.

Pleasant relations reëstablished in after years.

change of letters. Their children and descendants, says Grimm, have always claimed a kind of personal relationship to the great poêt, as close and enduring as that of blood.

How strange! A young girl with no possible title to fame, and an average unoffending jurist, both precipitated into immortality by a brief contact with a great man. But this has been the fate of all Goethe's friends. Like the perishable fern-leaf which impressed its form upon the primeval rock while it was yet young and susceptible, these men and women who left their images upon the poet's mind have reaped an involuntary immortality.

Involuntary immortality.

V.

SHORTLY after his return to Frankfort, Goethe was induced by his friend Merck to start with him on a journey to the Rhine. Merck, who is now chiefly known as having furnished the external model for Mephistopheles, was a born cynic, a man of much sound sense and an extensive knowledge of the world. He had a talent for detecting shams; he was aware of the worm at the core of the apple the moment he touched the fruit, and he refused to enjoy the sound and untainted parts that remained, because of the presence of the worm. His conversation was remarkable for incisive wit and not without brilliancy. He was a knowing man, but not a wise one; for he lacked faith in human goodness and truth, or, as Goethe puts it, he was destitute of nobility. Nevertheless, his knowingness and his superiority to all illusions affected Goethe with a peculiar fascination; he became his constant companion and seems for a while to have been almost indispensable to him. Although Goethe even at that time appears to have formed a very just estimate of his character, he could never quite rid himself of the charm of his presence, cherishing, as he says, a *naïve* confidence that Merck would never turn his worst side toward him. Merck, on the other hand, was one of the first to discover the great possibilities which dwelt in his young friend. With shafts of pitiless wit he destroyed many of his youthful idols, ridiculed his imagined devotion to Lotte, and lashed the sentimental tendency in him with unsparing criticism. Nevertheless, he took an honest interest in his literary

Merck.

The character of Merck.

His pitiless wit.

progress, assisted him with money and counsel, and no doubt at heart entertained a very sincere respect for his character and ability. He was especially instrumental in securing Goethe's coöperation as a reviewer for the "Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen," the organ of a literary school, the Storm and Stress (Sturm und Drang), with which the poet in his first works had identified himself.

The Storm and Stress was the German epilogue to the French drama in which Rousseau had been the chief actor. It was, as some one had said, a feebler counterpart of the mighty revolution which Voltaire and Rousseau had prepared, and which was soon to convulse all Europe. The Germans, however, as a nation of professors, fought it out, not with blood, but with ink. In its first origin it was a reaction and a protest against the utilitarianism and the dry rationalistic culture of the School of Enlightenment, which waged war against all bold originality and emotional vigor. Rousseau had clamored for a return to nature, and had condemned the hollow artificiality of the modern social structure. This was also the central doctrine of the Storm and Stress. Civilization had been a process of steady deterioration; it alone was responsible for all the misfortunes which had befallen the race. Everything came perfect from the hand of nature, but man had spoiled it; by nature, however, the Storm and Stress understood, not the grand and serene force which paints the petals of the rose and keeps the planets in their spheres, but rather a sentimental and benevolent agency which respects the accidental peculiarities of the individual, and is anxious to secure his happiness. In accordance with this belief, the eighteenth century, after the example of Rousseau, constructed for itself an imagined state of primitive bliss in which every arbitrary instinct and every lawless passion should find immediate gratification. This again, in the authors of the Storm and Stress school, led to willful

The Storm and Stress school.

The school's conception of nature.

The influence of Rousseau.

eccentricity and a studied exaggeration of personal peculiarities, as any deviation from the ordinary type of civilized humanity was believed to imply original force and genius. Some used strange and fantastic language, others allowed their hair and beard to grow wild, and again others dressed in outlandish costumes, all of which was meant to indicate a nearer approach to nature. Every noble emotion and feeling, which in a state of nature had been strong and healthy, had been gradually blunted and corrupted by the over-refinement of culture; and to compensate for this loss the "original geniuses" of the school artificially intensified their language, developing its strength at the expense of taste and decency, and in the end produced a singular linguistic mixture of paradoxical violence and emotional sophistry. In literature this tendency led to an arbitrary worship of those authors who, owing nothing to culture, were supposed to speak the language of undisguised nature. The clear sonorous strength of Homer and the passionate energy of Shakspere were praised, and in a superficial manner imitated; but the allegorical mysticism of the Hebrew prophets and the moonshiny sentimentality of Ossian were held to be equally genuine manifestations of primitive vigor, and equally worthy of imitation.

The "original geniuses."

Their literary predilections.

It is easy to see that amid much that was artificial and purely illusory in the tenets of this school, there was also much that was legitimate and real. The School of Enlightenment had emphasized the rights of the reason to the exclusion of those of the heart; the Storm and Stress clamored for the rights of the heart and suspended those of the reason. But a return to nature, even if it be accompanied by much nonsense and paradoxical declamation, is always a healthy tendency, and is sure to yield a solid result. Thus in pointing to Homer, Shakspere, and the popular ballad as the purest poetic models, the Storm and

The Storm and Stress *versus* the School of Enlightenment.

The return to nature.

Stress infused a new life into German literature and gave it a mighty onward impulse. And the men of real genius and genuine worth, who identified themselves with the movement, soon outgrew its follies, while they retained that which was legitimate and true. Thus Herder, stimulated by Rousseau, unfolded a wide and beneficial literary activity, and hurled forth many a mighty thought which cleared the intellectual atmosphere and has been of incalculable value in literature, in philology, and in religion. We have seen how Goethe, deriving his first stimulus from Herder, applied the doctrines of the school in his "Götz von Berlichingen," thus producing a drama which by its vitality and force still maintains its place in the national literature. And we shall see how, in the "Sorrows of Werther," the Storm and Stress celebrates its most signal triumph.

The suicide of Jerusalem.

About a month after his departure from Wetzlar, Goethe received a letter from Kestner announcing the suicide of a young man named Jerusalem, an attaché of the Braunschweig legation. Goethe had known him as a student in Leipsic and later in Wetzlar, but had never stood in any intimate relation to him. Jerusalem had had a quarrel with his superior at the legation, had received a reprimand from his government, and had in a very offensive manner been refused admittance to a noble company. His sense of honor had been cruelly wounded and his ambition had received a severe check. In addition to this he had had the misfortune to fall desperately in love with the wife of an official in the town, had been rash enough to declare himself, and the husband had forbidden him his house. He had then written a note to Kestner which is literally reproduced in "Werther," begging him to lend him his pistols for a journey he was about to undertake, and in despair had ended his life. From Kestner, Goethe, at his own request, received a minute, business-like account of all that had happened.

And the causes that led to it.

This was the incident to which "Werther" owed its origin.

The origin of "Werther."

After his recent experience in Wetzlar, Goethe could vividly imagine the state of feeling which had driven Jerusalem to the fatal act; even to himself the thought of suicide had not been entirely foreign; the prospect of a return to the narrow existence in Frankfort, with its legal quibbling and daily association with his pedantic father, with whom he had so little in common, had been so repugnant to him that at times even non-existence appeared preferable. But his healthy nature had soon shaken off these morbid reflections, and his love of life had reasserted itself. The work on the novel comes to his rescue; in representing objectively the feelings which had possessed him, he, as it were, puts them outside of himself, and being then subject to criticism, they are no longer dangerous. In June, July, and August, 1773, the plot steadily occupies his mind; in the beginning of 1774 the novel is already far progressed, and in September he sends a printed copy to Kestner and Lotte.

Goethe tries to warn Kestner and Lotte of what is coming.

In the mean while he had in his letters given them frequent but not very intelligible hints that they had some connection or other with the book he was writing. Being uncertain as to how so faithful and yet so arbitrary a version of their own history would impress them, he is evidently anxious to prepare their minds for something extraordinary and if possible to prepossess them in its favor.

Kestner's indignation at the publication of "Werther."

In these efforts, however, he signally failed. Kestner could only judge the book from his individual point of view; it seemed to him a wanton publishing of the sacred facts of a friendship which the world had no right to know. The intermingling of actual and fictitious events was to him merely an unwarrantable distortion of the truth. More especially he resented the part which had been assigned to himself as Albert, the jealous husband. But time and the sudden extraordinary fame of the novel made him revise his first

impressions, until he gradually began to discover its poetic worth. He answered Goethe's impulsive letter of apology in a manner which does honor to his judgment and character, and their friendship was soon fully reëstablished.

In "Werther" Goethe has written the heart-history of his times. It was not the simple and accidental story of Kestner and Lotte and Jerusalem which moved all Germany to tears, but it was something beyond and above them, which through the poet's agency, they are made to represent. The Werther, Lotte, and Albert of the novel, although they had borrowed the external features of the author's friends, had received from himself something much more precious, something that made them not only individuals, but eternal types. It was the very life-blood of the eighteenth century which pulsated in their veins. He who now reads the book in cold blood finds it hard to comprehend the tearful rapture with which it was hailed by thousands as it came fresh and warm from its creator's hand; and if he reads it in the painfully labored English translation,[1] in which the throb and glow of its impassioned language are smothered and cooled into a decorously spasmodic languor, the charm of the story will ever remain a secret to him. But then the nineteenth century has progressed far toward the solution of the problem which to its predecessor appeared insoluble. Goethe himself indicated the solution in the second part of his "Faust," and we have accepted the lesson, and still further elaborated it.

The heart-history of the century.

The English translation labored and inadequate.

The eighteenth century had, by the aid of Rousseau, just become conscious of the rich possibilities which lay hidden in the human soul, and the external world with its traditionally fixed social institutions, which placed so many hindrances in the way of the immediate realization of these possibilities, appeared needlessly heartless and unsympa-

[1] I refer to the translation by R. D. Boylan in the Bohn Standard Library. London, 1854.

thetic. The discrepancy between the ideal and the real, between mind and matter, assumed formidable proportions. This gave rise to a wide-spread sentiment, the so-called *Weltschmerz* (world-woe), which found its first interpreter in Rousseau, and which in English literature has been most powerfully expressed by Byron. In Rousseau and Byron, however, it assumes the form of a defiant protest, while in Werther it is but a deep regret, a helpless sorrow. Werther is, in this respect, a genuine German; for, as Madame de Staël has said, the Germans display an astonishing activity and energy in their private relations, and it is on this account only the more surprising how meekly they submit to every established authority. They expend so much of their brain-power in speculation that they have little left for action; at least, not enough for a revolution. No nation had in the eighteenth century evolved more excellent theories of government, but no nation slept more peacefully in the arms of a soulless and despotic reaction. Werther, like all the rest, had a keen eye to discover what was wrong in the organization of state and society, and much ingenuity in accounting for it; but, like the rest, he refused to lift a finger to amend it. He contents himself with the *rôle* of a superior discontented critic. He shakes his head gloomily at the misery of the world, but it suggests to him no responsibility, no duty to labor for its amelioration; a soul of his fine calibre cannot besmirch its dainty fingers by seizing hold of the wheels and levers of the coarse reality; he prefers to write voluminous letters to his bosom friend, full of melancholy *esprit*, in which he clearly proves to the satisfaction of both that the world is out of joint, that he has no more use for it, and that it has no more use for him. "He hovers," says Grimm,[1] "in the air, high

The *Weltschmerz* of Byron, Rousseau, and Werther.

The sources of Werther's discontent with reality.

Quotation from H. Grimm.

[1] *Goethe: Vorlesungen gehalten an der Königlichen Universität zu Berlin.* Von Hermann Grimm. Erster Band, p. 190. Berlin, 1877.

above domes and palaces, and observes with the eyes of a sad eagle what is going on here below." Had he lived in the German empire of to-day, Werther would have found very little sympathy for his sorrows; for Germany has, as every one knows, now outgrown its Hamlet-period, and within its literature Freytag has expounded the gospel of work no less forcibly than Carlyle has done it in England.

The justification of Werther's sorrows.

Nevertheless it was true; it was a miserable reality in which Werther lived: a government which promptly repressed every symptom of awakening political life within the nation, smothering its energy or forcing it inward where it could only waste itself in morbid self-analysis and brooding speculation; a half feudal society, arbitrarily divided according to birth and rank, and below this the languid machine-like existence of the *bourgeoisie*, with its petty aims and cares, its narrow horizon and its suffocating utilitarian philosophy. Place a youth of genius like Werther, with a warm heart and high ideals, in the midst of such an existence, and there are but two results imaginable: either he must conquer it or it must conquer him. Werther, however, being too weak to do the former, and too strong for the latter, discovers a third possibility; he rids himself of the obnoxious reality by a pistol shot. The ostensible reason for this act was his love for Lotte, then the wife of his friend Albert; it was, however, not the first cause, but rather the last in a long chain of causes. Even before his meeting with her he had "nursed his heart like a sick child, granting every one of its wishes;" he had painfully felt how superfluous he was in the practical world, and had been perpetually plunging from one extreme to another. "How often do I lull my agitated blood to rest," he writes to his friend Wilhelm, "for anything so fluctuating, so unsteady as this heart you have never seen. My dear, do I need to tell you that, you who have so often borne the bur-

The feudal organization of society.

Werther's love for Lotte the ostensible reason for his suicide, but not the only one.

den of seeing me pass from sorrow to dissipation, from sweet melancholy to destructive passion?" There is a worm gnawing at the root of his life, and all its juices are diseased; in other words, the tragic problem lies in his own character, not in any external combination of events. His love for Lotte merely hastens the development of his malady and brings it to a crisis. The feeling of his false relation to society, the wounding of his pride, and the check which his ambition receives are also coöperative causes. Napoleon, who read the "Sorrows of Werther" during his Egyptian campaign, and who had a just appreciation of its power, found in this complexity of motives its chief fault; and Goethe, singularly enough, admitted the justice of his criticism, while in reality the tragedy of Werther's fate is thereby intensified and made more universally typical.

Napoleon's opinion of "Werther."

The story itself is as destitute of plot as could well be imagined — a mere simple narrative of commonplace events told in a warm and lucid prose which seems to have welled forth with impetuous spontaneity from the author's over-charged heart, like those clear warm fountains which burst forth suddenly from the depths of the earth. This language was in itself a miraculous novelty to an age which had but lately regaled itself on the studied artificiality of Gottsched, and which yet admired Klopstock's pompous magniloquence. Lotte, the object of Werther's passion, is Goethe's friend Lotte, artless, domestic, and full of fresh, girlish sentiment — as faithful a portrait as any author ever produced. Giving her dark eyes instead of blue is a very ineffectual disguise; the general blondness of her appearance and, I might say, of her character seems to demand blue eyes, and the reader finds it hard to accept the author's assertion to the contrary. Like the real Lotte (though it is difficult to decide which is the more real) when Goethe first met her, she was, during her early ac-

Simplicity of the plot.

The portraits drawn from life, with slight variations.

quaintance with Werther, only engaged, not married. The parallelism is complete throughout, except in the tragic conclusion. Werther, too, is not Jerusalem, but Goethe; the author has, as he confesses, lent his hero his own feelings, and, he might have added, the emotional half of his own personality. In the portraiture of Albert, Lotte's betrothed, he has, on the other hand, taken several liberties; the exigencies of the plot demanded that Albert should be jealous, while Kestner was not; nor was he so grimly unsympathetic and practical as the novel represents him. But the resemblance was yet sufficiently pronounced to give Kestner just cause for complaint.

Werther not Jerusalem, but Goethe.

The furor of enthusiasm with which the book was received far exceeded Goethe's expectations. It was republished in pirated editions, imitated, parodied, discussed, and criticised in pamphlets and newspapers, extolled to the skies, ridiculed, and condemned. It was translated into all the languages of Europe and even found its way to China. Pilgrimages were made to Jerusalem's grave, and all Germany wept over his fate; his costume, blue coat and knee-breeches, became the fashionable dress among young men. Goethe himself was thus attired on his arrival in Weimar, and at the court everybody immediately imitated him; whoever could not afford to buy a similar uniform received one as a present from the duke.[1]

The enormous success of "Werther."

No one needs to be told that it was very remote from Goethe's intention either to recommend suicide or to dissuade from it. He merely worked out his problem with strict regard for the psychological truth. No one was more alarmed and distressed than he, when he heard of the mania for self-destruction which his work had occasioned. Nevertheless, when Lord Bristol, many years later, seriously reproached him for the injury his "Werther" had done in encouraging

Goethe's conception of the problem a purely psychological one.

[1] *Goethe: Vorlesungen gehalten an der Königlichen Universität zu Berlin.* Erster Band, p. 101. Berlin, 1877.

suicide, he answered, probably with a mixture of jest and earnest, "How many thousand victims are sacrificed to your English commercial system? Why should not I, too, have the right of sacrificing a few victims to my system?"[1]

Outgrew the Gothic period.

Gradually, as he outgrew the Gothic period of his life, with the tendencies which it represented, he lost all sympathy with "Werther," and at last even found it hard to convince himself that it was he who had written it. Thus in 1821, while conversing with Chancellor von Müller, he made the following remark: "During my present reading of my novel, I often feel like saying to myself, what the Cardinal d'Este once said to Ariosto: 'Where the deuce, Master Ludovico, did you get all that mad stuff from?'"[2]

Lessing's judgment of "Werther."

Lessing, who was one of the few who were able to judge the book coolly and without prejudice at the time of its appearance, did not underestimate the charm of its beauty and its ardent improvisation, but his keen practical intelligence also enabled him to detect its morbid and unwholesome tendency. "If only," he writes to his friend Eschenburg, October 26, 1774, "so warm a production does not accomplish more harm than good! Don't you think that a short, cool epilogue ought to be added to it — a few hints at the end, how Werther came to be such a whimsical character; how another youth, whom nature had given similar proclivities, might guard himself against them? For such a one might easily mistake the poetic for moral beauty, and believe that he must have been a good man who can so powerfully work upon our sympathy. And that he was surely not; nay, if our friend Jerusalem's mind had really been in this condition, then I could almost despise him. Do you think that a Roman or a Greek youth would have taken his own life thus and for such reasons? Surely not.

Quotation from Lessing.

[1] *Goethe's Unterhaltungen mit dem Kanzler v. Müller*, p. 10.
[2] Ibid. p. 36.

. . . . Therefore, my dear Goethe, another little chapter as a conclusion, and the more cynical the better."

This is, perhaps, a one-sided judgment; and as for the cynical epilogue, which Lessing actually undertook to write, but never published, it would have marred the poetic harmony of the work. It would have been glaringly out of tune — a harsh discord at the end of a beautiful symphony. Among Goethe's writings "Werther" is, judged from an æsthetic point of view, second only to "Faust;" its morbid tendency lay primarily in the age, and as such found its natural expression in the novel. And once expressed, it was half conquered; it could no more be as dangerous as it had been.

A one-sided judgment.

VI.

AMONG the friends of Goethe's youth Lavater and Fritz Jacobi assume special prominence. Lavater was by birth a Swiss, a resident of Zürich, and is yet known as the inventor of the so-called science of physiognomy. He was a very complex character, an odd mixture of contradictions, and whatever epithet you apply to him, you are aware that many of his acts belie it, and that the very opposite would be equally applicable. Overflowing, emotional *naïveté*, which was, however, too conscious to be perfectly sincere, and cool, calculating diplomacy were his principal characteristics. Under all his religious enthusiasm and fervid declamation there always seems to be a cold devil lurking, who nicely weighs every word and speculates as to its effect upon the audience. Every river of pure emotion is made to drive some remunerative grist-mill. It was but natural that with such a man religion should soon degenerate into a trade — a traffic in prophecies, mesmerism, and all manner of mystical superstitions. It is not unlikely, however, that in duping the multitude Lavater also duped himself; Goethe, at all events, always adhered to this belief. He was a minor, more decorous, or less perfectly developed type of the species of which Cagliostro was the most pronounced representative. He also hailed the latter as a great light, a genuine worker of miracles, and, even after his impositions had been clearly proved, persisted in believing him a great and holy man. There was some mistake of identity, he thought; the convicted impostor was not the real Cagliostro.[1]

Lavater.

An honest impostor.

[1] For an exhaustive characterization of Lavater see H. Düntzer, *Freundesbilder aus Goethe's Leben*. Leipzig, 1853.

Goethe, who had been initiated into the religious mysteries of the times by a Hernhuttean lady, Fräulein von Klettenberg, was at first not indisposed to share Lavater's hallucinations. Their acquaintance, which had been strengthened by a preliminary correspondence into a warm friendship, after some years cooled into a mere acquaintance. They were too radically different to be at all sympathetic, and yet their first meeting was rapturous. Lavater, bursting in through the open door of Goethe's house in Frankfort, cries out: "Is it thou?" and Goethe answers, "It is I," and they rush into each other's embrace. They take a journey together to the Rhine, discuss, in a youthful, enthusiastic fashion, literary, social, and religious matters, and then part again, no doubt with a feeling of relief. Goethe helps Lavater in his labor upon his great work on Physiognomy, contributes a chapter on the skulls of animals,[1] and for a while, as their correspondence shows, takes a hearty interest in his friend's affairs. It is curious to observe, however, that even then he had a very clear perception of his moral deficiencies, as is plainly shown in the dramatic fragment "Mahomet," of which Lavater in Mussulman disguise is the real hero. He is there depicted as a shrewd and wordly-wise enthusiast who deludes both himself and his followers. In proportion as Goethe's Greek predilections and his devotion to Spinoza remove him from Lavater's mystical sphere, his repugnance for the latter's religious sentimentality increases, and at last when seeing him accidentally in the streets of Zürich he changes his course in order to avoid meeting him.

Lavater's first meeting with Goethe.

The dramatic fragment "Mahomet."

Fritz Jacobi, born 1743.

Fritz Jacobi, although by nature a less positive character than Lavater, and less brilliantly endowed, was by far the more lovable of the two. As an author, his influence has proved much more ephemeral, and

[1] *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret.* Bohn's Standard Library, London, 1874, pp. 368 and 369.

his two principal romances, "Allwill" and "Woldemar," are now remembered only as exaggerated imitations of Goethe's "Werther." In "Woldemar," especially, Jacobi unconsciously parodied his friend, and was innocently astonished when Goethe, although on quite different grounds, condemned the book.

Jacobi was born in 1743, and was accordingly six years older than Goethe. His father, who was a manufacturer, had educated him for business, from which, however, after a few years' experience he retired. In 1774, when Goethe made his acquaintance, he was connected with the custom-house in Düsseldorf, and bore the title of arch-ducal counselor. He was a handsome man of noble presence and ideal aspirations, and with a full-flowing vein of sentiment. His intellectual power manifested itself in a ready assimilation of foreign ideas and considerable dialectic skill in expounding them; but he was utterly destitute of creative genius. By dint of strong faith and an ardent temperament he appropriated his borrowed ideas so completely that they became henceforth the very elements of his being. This may account for his life-long Wertherism, which was perhaps at first the cause of Goethe's liking for him and afterwards the cause of their alienation. His philosophical writings, too, especially his controversy with Mendelssohn concerning Lessing's attitude toward Spinoza, are characterized by a half sentimental dilettanteism which shrinks from boldly logical conclusions.

Characterization of Jacobi.

Life-long Wertherism.

Goethe had long yearned to find a bosom friend to whom he might open the deeper depths of his being, and communicate that vague fullness of thought which he felt to be laboring within him. In Jacobi he encountered, perhaps for the first time in his life, a man approximately of his own age whose ideas were akin to his own and whose character inspired him with an absolute trust. Now followed days and nights of rapturous confidences; the two friends poured out their hearts

Mutual affection and friendship.

to each other, and each was generously astonished at the wealth and beauty of the other's soul. The most dithyrambic letters from both are preserved, showing how warm and sincere their mutual affection was. Goethe tells in his autobiography how after a prolonged discussion of Spinoza they retired late in the night to their sleeping apartments; but sleep under such circumstances seemed a waste of time. Goethe sought his friend once more. "The moonshine," he says, "trembled away over the broad Rhine, and we, standing at the window, feasted on the fullness of mutual giving and receiving, which flows so abundantly in that glorious spring-time of life." But this friendship, beautiful though it was, was also destined to die a slow and gradual death. It survived many brief misunderstandings, and no actual rupture ever took place. But the higher law of Goethe's progress Jacobi was unable to understand; while he himself remained stationary in the region of thought which he had once made his own, new and ever new vistas burst upon Goethe's vision, his horizon expanded, and he looked back upon his Werther period as the serpent upon his cast-off skin.

Nocturnal discourses.

Misunderstandings and gradual alienation.

"Jacobi,"[1] he said (1827) to Eckermann, "loved me personally, without taking any interest in my endeavors, or even approving of them: friendship was necessary to bind us together. But my connection with Schiller was remarkable because we found the strongest bond of union in our common efforts, and had no need of what is commonly called friendship."

Goethe's friendship for Jacobi and for Schiller compared.

It is an almost tragic fact that fidelity to one's self and one's best ideals so frequently involves the sacrifice of beautiful personal relations, which, though once helpful and stimulating, would now only retard our growth. It is true

[1] *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret*, p. 237. Bohn's Standard Library, London, 1874.

that Goethe allowed a friendship to stand only so long as its existence was based upon an actual community of feeling and interest. This is not selfishness, though it may be, in the philosophic sense, egoism; but, if so, it is the divine egoism of the Olympian Jove, who, dwelling serenely above the storms of the lower atmosphere, — where no rains or snows descend, — unfolds in lofty solitude the flower of his strength according to the law of his own exalted being. For Jacobi Goethe always continued to cherish a kindly personal regard, at the same time as, in the interest of truth, he denounced his opinions and his literary tendencies; and Jacobi, hearing of the harsh judgments which had been pronounced upon his books, took offense, and then, remembering gratefully what this great man had been to him, was ever again ready to be reconciled.

Olympian selfishness.

Personal good-will and literary hostility.

In the winter following his abrupt departure from Wetzlar (1774–75) Goethe renewed his acquaintance with a young girl, Anna Elizabeth Schönemann, the daughter of the widow of a rich Frankfort banker. Lillie, as she is called in the autobiography, was then sixteen years old, a blonde of the purest type, an accomplished coquette, and altogether a very exquisite little phenomenon. I cannot share the opinion of Lewes, Goedeke, and other biographers, who believe Goethe's passion for this fascinating Lillie to have been a mere delusion. His own account of their relation is very frank and natural, and offers no special difficulties to anybody who is not blind to the charms of physical beauty.

Anna Elizabeth Schönemann.

An accomplished coquette.

It was the fresh, girlish *naïveté* of Lillie which first attracted Goethe toward her. She attributed to him as an author a profound knowledge of the human heart, and in many a delightful *tête-à-tête* she revealed to him the interesting little mysteries of her own. One can easily imagine the innocent solemnity (like that

Lillie's attractions.

of a serious canary-bird [1]) with which she confessed to him the wicked pleasure she took in beguiling young men into her snares, and then dismissing them again when their devotion began to grow wearisome. Goethe must have had a heart of stone if such a confession, coming from the mouth of a ravishing blonde, had left him cold. To be sure, he was fairly warned, but, like most lovers, refused to profit by his knowledge. Lillie probably felt no very deep regret at her wickedness, but continued to practice her arts with very satisfactory effect upon her new adorer. She attracted and repelled him by turns, made him rage with jealousy, then rewarded him with some light, flattering favor, and thus succeeded in keeping him steadily at her feet. The fact that Lillie held herself so precious made her naturally appear very precious to him. She drew him into a whirl of social gayety which had hitherto been quite foreign to him, chained him with her eyes to the card-table which he detested, made him dance attendance upon her at balls and parties and concerts, and from her elevated station as a brilliant lady of the world treated him with a delightful unceremoniousness, as if Götz and Werther had never existed. If Friederike and Lotte had played their cards as skillfully, their romances would not have come to such an untimely end.

Lillie's "wicked pleasures."

Her successful tactics.

To judge Lillie from a lofty moral point of view, to call her a heartless coquette, unworthy of the devotion of a sensible man, may appear an easy matter to middle-aged moralists, but to a warm-blooded and susceptible young man like Goethe an affair of this sort was not to be so briefly disposed of. We see without wonder how, even in his old age, when Friederike and Lotte are mere half-extinct legends of his youth, his thought reverts again and again

Goethe's affection for Lillie more serious than Mr. Lewes assumes it to have been.

[1] I have a vague impression that some one has used this comparison before, but, as I am not positive, I cannot make up my mind to sacrifice it.

to Lillie, and how fondly he still lingers at the memory of what she had been to him. That a willful and spoiled child, as she was, could have called out so much affection in a man of genius may appear strange, but it is by no means incomprehensible. One delightful little touch in his characterization of her (to which no other term than naughtiness can be applied) gives one a peculiarly vivid idea of her. She had a habit, he says, when anything displeased her, of making a sweeping gesture of impatience with her right hand. Once when there was a dinner-company at her mother's house, a gentleman who was seated next to her introduced an improper subject of conversation. Lillie, without changing the expression of her sweet face, calmly swept her right hand over the table-cloth, pushing knife, fork, plate, bread, salt-cellar, and various other objects down upon the floor. And Goethe cannot help praising her for having "in such a delicate manner" relieved the embarrassment of the company and blotted out the disagreeable impression produced by the clumsy remark of her neighbor.

Characteristic traits of Lillie.

After three months of assiduous courtship Goethe was, in a somewhat unforeseen manner, by the interference of a well-meaning lady friend, engaged to Lillie. But such was the waywardness of his nature, that the wildest charm of the maiden, which the tantalizing aspiration and the breathless pursuit had inconceivably heightened, vanished with the secure possession. Nevertheless, he loved her, and was firmly resolved to marry her. "There is something pitiful," says Grimm,[1] "in the spectacle of this poor girl with her simple arts, now at last subdued, conquered, and trying to make herself pleasing to him whom she loves. But with all her prudence she does not recognize against what a power she has entered the lists. Goethe's demoniacal impulse to suffer no bonds,

Goethe's engagement to Lillie.

[1] Grimm's *Vorlesungen gehalten an der Königlichen Universität zu Berlin.* Erster Band, p. 263.

even the dearest, broke and tore asunder what had been so delicately woven and joined together."

Affectional complications.

Lillie knew well enough that Goethe was drifting away from her. She was too proud to court sympathy as a maiden abandoned by her lover; but on the other hand she loved him too well to dismiss him. Feeling that it was the frivolous life from which she could not tear herself which separated her from him, she even proposed to him, in a moment of despairing humility, to abandon all her old associations, to run away with him to America, and live there with him and for him. But he was ready neither to make nor to accept such a sacrifice. After many misunderstandings and vehement reconciliations, Goethe at last, in a fit of jealousy, broke the engagement. The thought of her, however, still haunted him. Late one evening, as he was restlessly strolling through the empty streets, he found himself outside of her dwelling. He went to the window and laid his ear close to the shutters. There she was, sitting at the piano (no doubt in a most ravishing toilet), for he heard her clear young voice coming out to him, singing his own song which he had written for her, "Warum ziehst du mich unwiderstehlich." He had to summon all his power of self-control, he says, to prevent himself from rushing in upon her.

Goethe breaks the engagement.

A touching incident.

The future was to attach a touching epilogue to this charming little drama. Lillie in time married a Baron von Türkheim, and went to live with her husband in Strasburg, where Goethe saw her in 1779, then a happy wife and mother. When the French Revolution broke out the family fled, and Lillie came, in 1794, to Thuringia, where she made the acquaintance of the Countess Egloffstein, who frequently visited in Goethe's house. The name of Goethe's Lillie was then well known in Germany from the many lyrics he had addressed to her, but there were probably few who would have thought of identifying

that fresh and ever young maiden with the Baroness von Türkheim. In the course of their acquaintance Lillie is possessed with an overmastering impulse to confess to the countess what her relation has been to Goethe. She sees herself in retrospect as a foolish and frivolous girl, who knew not the worth of the precious thing that had been bestowed upon her in Goethe's love. And now her wonder is not that he left her, but that he could ever have loved her. She is eager to do him full justice. She tells how her association with him wakened her moral and spiritual nature, how all the growth of her later life received its first impulse from him, with what touching tenderness he cared for her; and she adds, it was only owing to him that their engagement ended without her disgrace.[1] She wishes the countess to communicate this confession to Goethe. But the countess for many years neglected to do this. At last, in 1830, when the poet was more than eighty years old, she eased her conscience and sent him Lillie's message. And this was his answer: "Only in a few words, honored friend, my grateful acknowledgment. I could not help pressing your precious note with emotion to my lips. I should not know what more to say. As an adequate reward, may you in some favored hour experience as great a joy."

Lillie and Countess von Egloffstein.

Lillie's message to her former lover.

Goethe's joy at receiving it.

After the battle of Jena (1806), when the French occupied Weimar, a young officer of hussars in Napoleon's service was heard anxiously inquiring for Goethe. Presently Goethe was seen walking through the streets with him toward the castle. This young officer was the Baron von Türkheim, Lillie's son.[2]

Lillie's son

[1] "Dasz sie 'ohne Schaden ihrer bürgerlichen Ehre' daraus hervorgegangen sei." Grimm, vol. i. p. 274. The above incident is, as far as I know, told for the first time by Grimm, and I have only retold it in my own words.

[2] Riemer's *Mittheilungen über Goethe.* Erster Band, p. 363.

VII.

AFTER the rupture with Lillie, Frankfort became unendurable to Goethe. The soil seemed to burn under his feet. The old routine of legal business, which had, indeed, never occupied much of his attention, became an oppressive burden, and he was only anxious for a pretext to shake it off. Happily such a pretext soon presented itself. The two princes of Saxe-Weimar passed through Frankfort in the autumn of the year 1775 and took much pleasure in Goethe's company. Presently an invitation to visit the court of Weimar followed, and was, no doubt, eagerly accepted. The elder of the princes, Karl August, soon became personally attached to the poet, and shortly after his succession to the government offered him the office of Geheime Legations Rath, with a salary of twelve hundred thalers (about one thousand dollars) and a vote in the grand ducal cabinet.

Goethe's departure for Weimar.

Goethe burst like a brilliant comet upon the peaceful horizon of Saxe-Weimar. In the quiet little city where life had moved drowsily in its old ruts for a couple of centuries, it was not to be expected that so extraordinary a character should be hailed with feelings of unmingled delight; there were enough of those who boded ill from his coming, and loudest among these were the men who believed their own interests imperiled by his rapid advancement in the favor and friendship of the duke. Karl August, however, knew well what a treasure he had secured in Goethe, and was determined to do everything in his power to keep him. It was a wild life which these two led together during the first year of their intercourse, and

A startling phenomenon.

scandal-mongers eagerly spread exaggerated rumors throughout Germany, representing the poet as the willful corrupter of his friend. Masquerades, private theatricals, hunting and skating excursions followed in rapid succession, and there was a whirl of life and gayety such as the languid Thuringian capital had never seen before. In spite of all this, however, no one could accuse Goethe of neglecting his official duties; from the moment of his accepting official responsibility he rendered more than a full equivalent for the pay he received, and the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar to-day abounds in monuments of his perseverance and skill. He raised the formerly insignificant city to the dignity of the intellectual centre of the German empire, and every foot-breadth of its soil is now hallowed by the memory of his presence. And when the first resentment of those who imagined themselves his rivals and the astonishment of Philistines had died away, the public could not fail to discover what the country had gained by the possession of such a man. Thus Schiller (1787) states in a letter to his friend Körner that Goethe is by a great many people in Weimar looked upon with a kind of adoration, and is beloved and honored as a man even more than as an author. Herder, he adds, asserts that he is even more admired as an official than as a poet. He is wholly whatever he is, and like Julius Cæsar he can be many things at the same time.

A wild life and scandalous rumors.

An exemplary official.

The indebtedness of Saxe-Weimar to Goethe.

Considering, then, how conscientiously Goethe devoted himself to the duties of his office, it is hardly to be wondered at that in his proper capacity as a poet he accomplished little during the first ten years of his residence in Saxe-Weimar. His lyrical vein, indeed, continued to flow with the same spontaneity and force as in former years, but the farces and comedies which he wrote for the edification of the court have no very great vitality, and lost their significance with the

Literary inactivity during the first years after his arrival in Weimar.

occasion to which they owed their origin. The drama "Iphigenia auf Tauris," which he recast during his Italian sojourn into a metrical form, is the only work of greater scope which serves as an evidence that the poetic Samson (to use a contemporary metaphor) had not been shorn of his locks by the princely Delilah.

Nevertheless it is only a superficial judgment which will pronounce this period of the poet's life barren and unproductive. A great intellectual revolution was fulfilling itself within him; he had come to doubt the methods of his youth, and no artistic creed of a clearer and more satisfying type had yet taken the place of the one he had abandoned. He therefore wisely refrained from casting any of the great poetic problems, which we know were then laboring in his soul, in this temporary mould, which he would be sure before long to reject. The wild ferment of his youth had found its proper expression in the fervid, tumultuous diction of the Storm and Stress; but the serener strength of his manhood demanded a clearer, cooler, and more severely artistic utterance. Nature, which had hitherto been little else than a grand and dim abstraction to him, now became more of a living reality. He had felt her warm presence, but without knowing her. Now the need became imperative to unveil the great mystery which he had blindly worshiped. Hence his zealous absorption in the study of geology, anatomy, and physics. With his large poetic vision he divined the identity of Nature in all her manifestations, the unity of all created things, and this clew only inspired him with the greater zeal in the pursuit of details. He had entered a temple where broad vistas unfolded themselves before him, and a beautiful serenity and gentleness took the place of the passionate abruptness and eccentricity of manner which had characterized his stormy youth. Karl August and Wieland both wondered at the change he had

This period, however, not unproductive.

Gradual change of style.

On the track of a large inspiring thought.

The unity of nature.

undergone, but found him no less warm-hearted, frank, and genial. The repressed strength of his nature seemed intensified rather than weakened. The defiant Titanism of Götz, Prometheus, and Faust, which had shaken impatiently the barriers of reality as a lion the bars of his cage, was cleared and sobered into a rich and vigilant repose. Recognizing the rationality of existence, he was now only eager to utilize it to the best advantage for himself and his fellow-men.

Less inflammable but not less fiery.

That contemporaries recognized this change is also evident from many letters written by Goethe's nearest friends and associates. Thus F. A. Stalberg, who visited him in 1784, writes to Voss:[1] "Goethe is less stormy, less easily inflammable than he was, but surely therefore no less fiery; and his heart is full of affection, ever yearning for more freedom of existence than men can find, and still winning blossoms from the pilgrim's staff of life. Few men are so affectionate, so pure, ... so devoted to the unattainable ideal of the καλοκἀγαθία, so tenacious of everything beautiful and lovely in the moral and in the visible world."

The slag separated from the pure ore.

This purification of Goethe's nature, which he himself compares to the separation of the slag from the pure metallic ore, was undoubtedly furthered rather than hindered by his practical activity as the duke's principal counselor. He was forced into contact with reality at many points where formerly he knew it only by hearsay; his fine senses imbibed impressions from the most heterogeneous sources, as a plant draws nourishment from the earth and the air, and assimilates it into vital tissues and fibres.

Frau von Stein.

A very exhaustive record of Goethe's inner and outer life during the first ten years of his residence in Weimar is afforded us in his correspondence with Frau von Stein, the wife of Baron von Stein, a no-

[1] Quoted from Hettner's *Goethe und Schiller*. Erster Band, p. 222.

bleman in the duke's service; she was seven years older than Goethe, and moreover, at the time of their first acquaintance, the mother of seven children. Her portrait, which is prefixed to Schöll's edition of Goethe's letters to her, shows her to have been a handsome though not a beautiful woman, with clear, delicately chiseled features, and the cool self-possession of a woman of the world. She played the guitar, conversed with brilliancy and animation, was well versed in modern literature, and bore, as well before as after her intimacy with Goethe, a blameless reputation. Let cynics who are incapable of conceiving of a pure and disinterested friendship between a man and a woman hold their own theory to the contrary; suffice it to say that there is not one jot of really weighty evidence to uphold any such hypothesis. I do not wish to discuss the question, but refer any one who is anxious to convince himself as to the nature of their relation to the admirably clear and concise statement of Grimm in his "Lectures on Goethe."[1] Especially significant to me is the fact that even the gossips of Weimar, who were eager for scandal, did not construe their intimacy to the discredit of either. Baron von Stein, too, whom everybody knew to be a man of honor, gave Goethe free access to his house and always remained on a friendly footing with him, and the son Fritz, upon whom the poet especially showered his affection, clung to him with a steadfast devotion which suffered no abatement until death separated them.

Her accomplishments.

The nature of her relation to Goethe.

Of course Goethe loved Frau von Stein with something more than a brotherly affection, although he frequently in his letters addressed her as his sister; but he was well aware of the hopelessness of his love. To be sure, she reciprocated his feelings; her own wedded life had failed to satisfy the deeper needs of her nature, and the pure homage and devotion of a man like

Her wedded life unhappy.

[1] Dreizehnte Vorlesung. Erster Band, pp. 295–314.

Goethe must have been ineffably sweet to her. She therefore, without compromising her dignity, exerted herself to keep him close to her as her trusted friend and admirer. The intellectual resources of her mind were great, and her power of sympathy was still greater; what wonder then that Goethe, with his wealth of unformed and half-formed ideas, which were ever struggling for utterance, should have felt irresistibly drawn toward her, if for no other reason, only to relieve himself of the burden of unuttered thought which must at times have weighed so heavily on him? Any man of letters who has known the delight of entering the mind of a refined and sympathetic woman, where his thoughts, however daring they be, are greeted with a hospitable and cordial welcome, will need no cynical theory to account for the enduring attachment of Goethe to Frau von Stein. How one's thoughts expand in this pure, warm atmosphere! how easily and spontaneously they rid themselves of the dross that may yet cling to them! what a rapturous consciousness of freedom and strength they develop under the gentle influences of such a companionship! That this was Goethe's experience during his intercourse with his friend there is abundant testimony to show. Under her fostering care the poetic problems which harass him gradually solve themselves; her sympathy with the noblest aspirations impels him to give her an almost daily account of his life and thought; everything, be it a practical difficulty in his relations with the duke or a poetic conception, is first communicated to her, and always accompanied by fresh assurances of unvarying affection and regard. The dramas "Tasso" and "Iphigenia," both of which illustrate the purifying and refining influences of a noble woman upon a passionate and turbulent man, are immortal monuments of his regard for her. In the novel "Wilhelm Meister," too, the same problem is incidentally treated.[1]

Mutual helpfulness and affection.

Frau von Stein as Goethe's critic and confidante.

[1] Goethe's principal work, *Faust*, I have refrained from discussing

For ten years this friendship endured. After Goethe's return from Italy new complications arose, of which I shall speak in a later chapter.

here, as its importance seemed to demand a separate and more exhaustive treatment than I could give it while dealing with the facts of the author's career.

VIII.

WHEN Goethe (September 3, 1786) started from Karlsbad for Italy, his connection with the Storm and Stress had been finally severed, and a new era in his life was about to begin. We have seen how during the later years of his sojourn in Weimar he had outgrown his youthful ideals and begun to feel the need of a loftier and more plastic style, which should adapt itself to the larger views and nobler aspirations of his mature manhood. His official duties had become more and more burdensome to him; many of his cherished plans had been frustrated by the duke's opposition, and the results of his labor scarcely seemed adequate to the great sacrifices which it entailed upon him. The consciousness of his proper calling, which had indeed never left him, now reasserted itself with redoubled force, and he resolved to obey the impulse which it prompted. Pegasus, though he may be induced for a while to draw the plow, cannot be permanently yoked and harnessed.

Goethe's connection with the Storm and Stress severed.

Italy had been a promised land to Goethe since his earliest youth. The views of its famous cities had been familiar to him in his childhood, and the yearning to tread on its classical soil had grown stronger with the years. At last, he confesses, he had hardly dared to open a Latin book for fear of fanning the glowing desire into a destructive blaze. He had, until the day of his departure, a half superstitious dread that his plan would be thwarted, and therefore kept his resolution secret, communicating it only to the duke, from whom a leave of absence had to be obtained. His unfinished manuscripts he carried

His yearning for Italy.

with him, hoping in the inspiring presence of the great monuments of antique art to be able to remodel them in accordance with the enlarged requirements of his new artistic creed. During his southward journey across the Brenner Pass into Lombardy, "Iphigenia" was ever uppermost in his mind, and after his arrival in Rome he completed it in its present metrical form.

The old and the new Rome.

In reading Goethe's account of his Italian journey we are deeply impressed with the fact that the Rome which he entered nearly a hundred years ago, through the Porta del Popolo, was not the Rome of tourists and hotels and railroads which we know to-day. There was no new part of the city then, with railroad stations and modern mansions of nondescript architecture;[1] the ghosts of the Cæsars still dwelt in their deserted palaces and walked abroad amid the shattered columns of the Forum. The havoc of modern improvements had as yet made its inroads on no hallowed soil. Rome was then the capital, not of Italy, but of the world. Its galleries had not yet been pillaged, and its slumbering native population had not been organized into a robber band to prey on the purses of pleasure-seeking foreigners. The Germanic nations had not yet asserted their right to the leadership of the world, and Romanism, though already on the verge of its decline, was still beautiful in its picturesque decay, and at least nominally the representative of the universal civilization.

Goethe's incognito.

After a leisurely progress through northern Italy Goethe arrived, October 29, 1786, in Rome. In order to avoid contact with the society which his fame and his high official rank might attract, he assumed the name Müller, which, among Germans, is as much of a *nomen appellativum* as Smith is with us. In the circle of artists, however, which he gradually gathered about him, it was well known who he was. In the house of Angelica Kauffman he soon found himself at home, and among the friends

[1] See Grimm. Zweiter Band, pp. 44–66.

who visited there, the painters Tischbein, Meyer, and later Philip Hackert especially attached themselves to him. He soon discovers that he has hitherto been a mere dilettante in art, that his eye is untrained, and that what he has admired in works of art has been a mere vague reflex of nature, which, after an uncritical fashion, he has recognized as appealing to something within him. Here, where the noble remnants of the Hellenic world are gathered, the Greek ideal, which had hitherto been a dim yearning with him, becomes a definite aspiration. From an obscurely comprehended historic fact it becomes a beautiful living presence; it becomes his own ideal. All his senses awaken to a clearer and keener perception of reality. He is alive in every fibre and drinks in the bright existence with joyous avidity. Life acquires a new meaning to him, and he reconstructs it in accordance with this new-won ideal. The blue Adriatic, in happy repose under the sunny sky, becomes to him an interpreter of Homer, and an Homeric drama immediately fashions itself in his mind. The immortal marble gods and heroes of the Vatican reveal to him the imperishable dignity of man, and point the way to that goal of harmonious self-development which henceforth he faithfully pursues to the end of his days. This ideal of a pure and beautiful humanity, resting on the basis of a healthy physical and intellectual life, may be regarded as the chief result of Goethe's Italian journey. And what a world of grand possibilities to himself and his nation is embodied in this ideal! His writings, to use Hettner's phrase, are from this time renaissance in the best sense. They are in the field of literature what the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo are in painting and sculpture. He fearlessly flings away his Gothic inheritance of traditional religion and culture, and gradually rears up about him a new structure, where for a while he dwells in lofty

His artistic sense developed.

Life acquires a new meaning.

The lesson taught by the antique sculptures.

He flings away his Gothic inheritance.

isolation, until Schiller, partly under his guidance, partly following his own artistic impulses, enters to dwell with him. The critical activity of Lessing and the artistic studies of Winckelmann had tended in the same direction, and he willingly acknowledges his indebtedness to them; they had cleared the path before him and made his progress easier toward the achievements which mark the latter half of his life, after his return from Italy.

His many-sided activity.

It was strictly consistent with this Hellenic ideal of harmonious culture, which does not demand the development of one predominant faculty, but of the whole man, that Goethe, instead of confining himself to his proper work as a poet, adapted himself so readily to all spheres of human activity that came in his way, and well-nigh excelled in all. In his youth he was not only a dramatist, a novelist, a lyrical poet, a reviewer and an art critic, but he was, as we have seen, a public functionary, rising by dint of ability to the highest office in the small state of which he was a citizen. He interested himself in all works of public improvement, superintended the administration of the University of Jena, laid out parks, and often with his own hands planted the trees, and descended with his geological hammer into the Ilmenau mines. He suffered no loss of dignity by taking part in a carnival procession, or by acting for the amusement of the court in his own plays. Those who saw him arrayed in Greek costume as Orestes, in his "Iphigenia," testify that a nobler and more beautiful man could hardly be imagined. And even in his later years, what an astounding activity he unfolded! As director of the ducal theatre (an office far more important and dignified in Germany than it is with us) he strove steadily to raise the standard of public taste; as an author he labored on unweariedly, making his influence felt in nearly all branches of human knowledge; and as a scientific discoverer he achieved results which are now

Poet, scientist, and public functionary.

Goethe as Orestes in "Iphigenia."

at last beginning to be estimated at their proper value. Besides this, he carried on an extensive correspondence with prominent men at home and abroad, which might almost lead one to suppose, considering the number of bulky volumes which have already been published and the possibly greater number which have not yet seen the light, that he must have devoted the greater part of his time to letter-writing. I mention all this merely to show what a vast fund of indestructible vitality dwelt in this man, and how near he came, in the pursuit of his noble Greek ideal, to reaching, not the type of this or that profession, but the pure universal type of man.

The Greek ideal of manhood.

I shall not undertake to trace Goethe's route through Italy, — his ascension of Vesuvius, his visit to Naples and Sicily, etc., — or recount the adventures which befell him on the way. A very attractive account of his life from day to day, and especially of his artistic studies, will be found in his book entitled "The Italian Journey," which he published many years later, using for his material the letters which he had written at the time to Frau von Stein, Herder, and other Weimarian friends. The journey is of importance to us only in so far as it affected his poetic productivity, and more especially his style. The change which this underwent cannot be characterized by any one sweeping phrase, either commendatory or condemnatory. It was neither wholly a gain nor wholly a loss. It is not to be denied that Goethe's youthful style in "Götz," "Werther," and the first part of "Faust" is much more in accord with the genius of his nation than the stately and somewhat bloodless classicism of "Iphigenia" and "Tasso." The warm spontaneity and sensuous strength and realism of the former were indigenous products, had sprung from the national character, and appealed to the national heart; while the lofty elegance and plastic grace of the latter were imported qualities, which had to be thoroughly domesticated before they could be

Goethe's Gothic and his classical style; and the characteristics of each.

comprehended and estimated at their proper worth. One can therefore hardly blame Goethe's friends in Rome and Weimar for refusing to be enthusiastic over "Iphigenia," which first signaled to them the change in his poetic diction. They missed the fire, the rhythmical surprises, the unstinted color, and the wild and wayward melody which once had won their hearts, and the pale metrical perfection and somewhat monotonous harmony of these sedately moving pentameters seemed scarcely an adequate compensation for all that had been lost. I am myself inclined to sympathize with this view, although I am well aware of the excellences of Goethe's classical style. It cannot be doubted that he has widened the range of his mother tongue, extending its sovereignty over a high and beautiful territory, which hitherto it had left unexplored. He has enabled it to soar with full and sustained breath in a region of thought where formerly it had but painfully groped or at most essayed brief and fitful swallow flights. He has dignified it, substituting the ample and flowing lines of the toga for the garish splendor and uneasy angularity of its native costume; and he has taught it to move with simple grace and majesty in its foreign garb. Moreover, in his "Hermann and Dorothea" he has united, as far as they are capable of a union, the excellences of his old and his new style, infusing a warm Germanic spirit and a certain realistic picturesqueness into the severe classical measures. This, to be sure, was no small gain, and Goethe labored with perfect consciousness for its attainment; nevertheless it is not to be wondered at that contemporaries, while regretting the loss of what they knew to be excellent, should accept with doubt and hesitancy what, at first sight, they but darkly comprehended.

The Gothic and the classical style compared.

The new style a territorial extension of the German language.

The excellences of both styles united.

After an absence of nearly two years Goethe returned in June, 1788, to Weimar. The contrast between the spirited

life and color of the South and the slow, monotonous routine of this drowsy Northern existence impressed him painfully. He even began to harbor the thought of a possible return to Italy and a permanent residence there. His friends, for the sight of whom he had yearned, had stood still while he had been conquering new realms of thought. They had little sympathy with the new ideas to which he clung with all the strength of his soul, and he soon saw that they could no more be to him what they had been before. With Herder he maintained for some time his friendly connection; but he too soon grew cool. It was Herder's misfortune that he could never tolerate a man at his side whose superiority to himself he was forced to recognize. He could not subjugate Goethe; and therefore he envied and slandered him; while Goethe, even after an open rupture had taken place between them, continued to speak of Herder with a frank appreciation of his great qualities, and had only charitable comments for his glaring faults.

Return to Weimar, June, 1788.

Herder's relation to Goethe.

No one in Weimar had probably anticipated Goethe's return with greater expectations than Frau von Stein. Their correspondence had been uninterrupted during his absence, and she was now eager for the renewal of the confidential relation which had been to her the source of so much happiness. But Goethe, recognizing that there was something abnormal and dangerous in this relation, dreaded to reëstablish it. He hoped to remain her friend; but he did not wish, as formerly, to make her the confidante of his most secret thoughts. He had now gained a more manly self-reliance, which could well dispense with sympathy when offered on such dangerous terms. Frau von Stein was unable to comprehend his reason for thus keeping her at a distance. She resented his apparent coolness, and, no doubt, ascribed it to unworthy motives. Then, to complete the rupture, Goethe trans-

Rupture with Frau von Stein.

ferred his confidence and his affection to another. He had made the acquaintance of a pretty, bright-eyed young girl, Christiane Vulpius, the sister of an author who later gained considerable notoriety, and subsequently took her into his house as his mistress. He also gave her mother and her sister a home with him, and although preliminarily no legal or ecclesiastical ceremony bound them together, Christiane assumed before the world the position of a wife. She was a fresh and blooming girl, with rosy lips and dimpled cheeks, of small but graceful form, fairly educated and intelligent, without, however, possessing noteworthy talents or accomplishments. What especially attracted him to her was her easy and joyous temperament, her domestic habits, and her great capacity for affection. She always remained tenderly devoted to him, and was ever disposed to regard his interests in preference to her own; although he is said to have repeatedly offered to marry her, she for many years refused, and probably yielded only in order to secure the social position of their son, August von Goethe.

Christiane Vulpius.

Marriage with Christiane.

In the year 1806, a few days after the battle of Jena, when she had heroically resisted the French soldiers who came bursting into their bed-chamber and threatened Goethe's life, he led her, with his son and his secretary Riemer as witnesses, to the church, where the marriage ceremony was performed.

In his "Roman Elegies" he has given a beautiful expression to his gratitude for the happiness which he owed to her. For twenty-eight years she walked faithfully at his side, directing his household affairs and sharing his scientific enthusiasm, especially his botanical studies. When she died in 1816, he wrote in his journal, "Thou triest, O sun, in vain to shine through the dark clouds! The whole gain of my life is to mourn her loss."

However the world may judge her, she was nearer to his heart than any one knew.

IX.

THE history of the origin and growth of the drama "Iphigenia in Tauris" is briefly as follows: In 1776 the composer Gluck (according to Grimm) wrote to Wieland, asking him to furnish the text for a cantata which he wished to compose in memory of his niece, who had lately died. Wieland refused, but recommended Goethe, who immediately attacked the subject, but was obliged to abandon it again. He could not work to order. The history and character of Iphigenia, however, which he had selected for the theme of the cantata, continued to occupy his mind. In February, 1779, his first vague plan had assumed a definite dramatic form, and in the course of this and the following month the drama was finished in its original prose form. April 1, 1779, it was enacted, Goethe taking the part of Orestes, the poet Knebel that of Thoas, and the duke's brother, Prince Constantine, that of Pylades. In a later representation the duke himself played Pylades. This first form, however, did not long satisfy Goethe. During the next year he recast the plot in a free metrical form, which again, in 1781, he remodeled into poetic prose. In 1786 the final metrical version which is included in the complete edition of his works took shape in Rome, in the presence of the dethroned gods of the antique world; in January, 1787, it was dispatched home to Weimar, where, as we have seen, it met with a very cool reception.

"Iphigenia in Tauris."

The various prose and poetic versions of "Iphigenia."

Of the style of the drama I have already spoken. It is the marble beauty of the Apollo Belvedere and the Venus of Milo translated into speech; if they

The marble style.

could speak, we may be sure that this would be their language. This style of Goethe's classical period has therefore been called "the marble style," and "the lapidary style."

The conception of the plot, however, and the whole tone which pervades it are anything but Greek. It differs essentially in its catastrophe from the "Iphigenia" of Euripides, from which the material is otherwise borrowed. A curse rests upon the race of Tantalus; the gods are avenging upon his descendants the ancestor's crime. Brother slays brother, and the wife plots her husband's death. Agamemnon, crowned with victory, returns from Troy, and is slain on the threshold of his home by his wife, Klytemnestra, and Ægisthus, her lover. The gods spur the son, Orestes, on to avenge his father, and he kills Klytemnestra and her paramour. The unnatural crime rouses the Furies, the goddesses of wrath, who pursue the mother-murderer, leaving him no peace night or day. His mind is clouded and the memory of the dreadful deed is ever before his eyes. Apollo, when questioned through his oracle, declares that the crime will be atoned for if Orestes can save his sister from the temple of the barbarians in Tauris. Believing it to be the god's own sister, Pallas Athene, whom he is to save from the hands of the barbarians, Orestes and his friend Pylades start in a ship for Tauris. They are captured by King Thoas's men, and, according to the custom of the land, are as strangers to be sacrificed before the altar of the goddess. In the temple Orestes recognizes in the priestess of Athene his sister Iphigenia, whom Agamemnon had carried with him to Troy, to buy with her life victory for the Greeks; but Athene had taken pity on her, had snatched her away from the altar and in a cloud conveyed her to Tauris, where, herself a virgin, she tended the sanctuary of the virgin goddess. So far Goethe's plot and that of Euripides coincide, or rather they coincide in their prem-

The plot of "Iphigenia."

Orestes and Pylades are captured.

Orestes recognizes his sister Iphigenia.

ises; for in both dramas the action really commences with the meeting of Orestes and Iphigenia in the temple.

The dramatic *motif*.

With Goethe the dramatic *motif* is really the character of Iphigenia; the whole action turns upon it; while with Euripides it does not assert itself in any strong relief above the rest. The latter, therefore, has to resort to a *deus ex machina*. Orestes and Pylades, thwarted in their attempt to carry off the image of the goddess under a false pretext, to which Iphigenia is a party, are to suffer death, when Athene appears in the clouds and announces that it is the will of the gods that they depart in peace. Thoas yields because he finds it imprudent to resist the gods. Goethe brings about a similar result, but by very different means. His Iphigenia, after having allowed herself to be persuaded by Pylades to deceive Thoas, cannot in the critical moment force herself to take the lie upon her lips, reveals the whole intrigue, and, appealing to his generosity, places her life and that of her brother and his friend in his hands. The king, who loves her, although she has but recently refused his offer of marriage, cannot but admire her dignified simplicity and moral greatness, and half reluctantly consents to let her depart with her countrymen. In her gentle presence Orestes regains his moral health; his soul grows clear and calm, and the Furies henceforth no more torment him. It was Iphigenia whose return to the land of her fathers Apollo had demanded as an expiation of the brother's guilt, not that of the goddess, his own sister.

The plot of Euripides and that of Goethe compared.

It will readily be seen that this solution of the tragic problem is thoroughly modern. The *dramatis personæ* are themselves responsible for their deeds, and their own characters fashion their destinies; no inflexible *Fatum*, residing outside of and above them, can arbitrarily burden them with guilt or remove it from them. A woman, of a warmly sympa-

Goethe's solution of the tragic problem is modern.

thetic nature and of high moral purity, stills the tempest in the mind of a brother, torn with the anguish of conscious guilt, and heals the wounds which an unkindly fate has inflicted. For it must be remembered that the misdeed of Orestes had been wrought under the stress of what to the Greek mind was a sacred duty. Iphigenia in her exile is a blessing to the wild land where she is forced to dwell; her mere presence soothes and elevates the rude and passionate soul of the king, and induces him to abolish the barbarous rites of human sacrifices. Such a conception is essentially the result of a Germanic civilization, and is, at all events, far above the horizon of a Greek poet.

Nevertheless, with all its excellences, "Iphigenia in Tauris" is not, in the strictest sense, a drama. It is utterly destitute of passion. It has something of the cold beauty of glacial sculpture with its cool, clear tints and occasional brilliant play of color. The pervading sentiment is noble, and the psychological analysis keen and intellectually interesting; but there is nothing to warm the reader or the spectator with thrills of sympathetic sorrow or delight. The action is unnecessarily calm and lagging; it has no special point where the interest culminates. Goethe was, as a psychologist, not far inferior to Shakspere; but, as he himself readily admits, he lacks the gift of unraveling his psychological problem in a series of swift, impassioned scenes which hold the reader's breath suspended and burn themselves indelibly upon his memory. "Iphigenia" and "Tasso" are both marvelous as intellectual achievements; but they impress one as studies, as closet dramas, which well repay a careful reading, but hardly bear the test of actual representation upon the boards. And this, after all, is the final test of the excellence of a drama.

Not in the strictest sense a drama.

Like "Iphigenia," the drama "Torquato Tasso" existed in an earlier prose version, and was rewritten in blank verse during the author's sojourn in Italy. It was not finished, however, until after his return to Weimar

"Torquato Tasso."

(1789). "Tasso" has always impressed me as a kind of subtle, veiled protest against "Werther" and Wertherism, and, as such, far more effective than the cynical epilogue which Lessing proposed. The poet thrusts his keen, analytical probe into his hero's soul and with scientific pitilessness lays bare its hidden fibre. If the result of this psychological diagnosis were not stated in the most exquisitely poetic language, it would be far from edifying. The emotional impetuosity and fervor which in "Werther" indirectly challenged admiration are here represented in their true relation to the unsentimental logic of reality, and, being confronted with a cool practical reason, are hopelessly worsted and well-nigh stripped of their illusory beauty. If the end were tragic, or, as in "Götz," merely pathetic, one might easily feel reconciled to it; but the poor hero is not even permitted to maintain a just claim upon our sympathy; he is humiliated, acknowledges his defeat, and is not far from kissing the hand which taught him the hard lesson. This is perhaps an extreme statement of the final situation; but it cannot be denied that it appears a little unjust, and is, at all events, inexpressibly disheartening. Judging merely by one's natural feeling, one cannot help thinking that Goethe the statesman and courtier has here got the better of Goethe the poet. Tasso, of course, has his weaknesses and his natural limitations, as has also Antonio, the courtier; but those of the former are so inseparable from his poetic genius, and are moreover so much more attractive than those of the latter, that the superiority which the author in the end accords to the courtier cannot fail to impress the reader as being somewhat excessive.

A psychological diagnosis.

Goethe humiliates his hero.

The effect disheartening.

The intrigue, if such a name can be applied to a mere succession of simple situations, may be briefly stated as follows: Tasso, after having finished his great work, "Jerusalem Delivered," presents it to

The plot of "Tasso."

Alphonso, Duke of Ferrara, of whose court he is the chief ornament. The duke, who, like many of the small Italian princes of his age, is proud of his protectorship of the arts and sciences, favors and indulges the poet, and his sister, the princess Leonora, secretly loves him. As a reward for his great poetic achievement, she takes a laurel wreath from the bust of Virgil and places it upon his head. Antonio, the duke's secretary of state, arrives from an important mission to Rome which he has accomplished to his master's satisfaction. He is astonished to see a new favorite installed in his place, and in polished courtier phrases gives vent to his envy of him by extravagant praise of Ariosto. Tasso, at the suggestion of Leonora, in his own impulsive manner offers him his friendship, which Antonio with irritating politeness refuses. A quarrel ensues; angry words are spoken. Tasso draws his sword, but is interrupted by the entrance of the duke, who with a gentle rebuke arrests him for breaking the peace of the palace. The duke, however, does not conceal his displeasure at the conduct of his secretary. The poet, in his vehement sorrow, misjudging the motives of his master, and believing himself deserted by all his friends, determines to leave the court. He announces his resolution to the princess, who expresses her sincere regret at losing him, and well-nigh betrays her love for him; in the rapture of this discovery he presses her to his bosom, is again surprised by the duke and Antonio, and is now forced to abandon all hope of a return and final reconciliation. Antonio, to whom he can now no more be dangerous as a rival, urges him to remain and expiate his offense, and moreover offers him the friendship which but lately he had refused to grant. Tasso accepts it, but persists in his determination to leave the court, and demands as a test of the new-won friendship that Antonio shall procure his dismissal from the duke. In a long con-

Tasso in favor at court.

Jealousy of Antonio.

Tasso is rebuked, and misjudges the duke's motives.

Tasso's banishment.

versation which ensues, he vehemently confesses that he has been in the wrong, gives full due to his former enemy for his many excellent qualities, and with warm professions of regard acknowledges his own inferiority to him. Thus the drama ends; and merely as a piece of worldly wisdom it is not to be quarreled with. In his contact with the court and the petty Thuringian nobility Goethe had soon learned that a large ideal vision and passionate intensity of feeling were a poor equipment for a man in his struggle with the actual world. They impeded rather than facilitated his practical usefulness. And while by the aid of his new-won Greek ideal he strove to conquer his old passionate self of the Storm and Stress period, and develop the keen, Argus-eyed intellect of his classic period, it was but natural that he should be unjust to the type embodying the former, and emphasize somewhat unduly the importance and excellence of the type representing the latter.

Ideality a barrier to practical usefulness.

The drama abounds in fine, quotable passages, whose calm, plastic beauty it would be hazardous to attempt to transfer into another language. The speeches of the duke and the princess are especially characterized by a gnomic wisdom, a tendency to sententious generalizations, which directly recalls the Greek chorus.

In Goethe's correspondence with the musician Zelter (vol. vi., No. 826) I find the following significant confession: "I am not born for a tragic poet, because my nature is conciliatory; therefore a purely tragic situation, which must be in its essence irreconcilable, cannot interest me, and, moreover, in this world, which is, on the whole, so extremely mean [*in dieser übrigens so äusserst platten Welt*], the irreconcilable appears to me quite absurd."

Goethe not a tragic poet.

This passage explains as an idiosyncrasy of the poet's what in his dramas appears as an intentional avoidance of every absolute conflict. Even in his "Faust," which of all his works comes nearest

A tragic conflict must be insoluble.

to being a tragedy, the second part offers a solution of the tragic problem which at the end of the first seems insoluble. And in "Egmont," too, there is no coherent, inexorable necessity which hurries the hero on toward his destruction, but a series of half accidental circumstances, some of which have no direct connection with his own guilt; and this guilt is one of omission and not of commission. The end, therefore, in spite of the somewhat melodramatic closing tableau, gives one the impression that a just cause has been defeated and that wrong has triumphed. It is evidently to counteract this impression that Clara, Egmont's beloved, appears to him in a vision as the goddess of liberty, and that the author, in a parenthetical stage direction, interprets this vision as a prophecy that by the hero's death his cause will triumph. The orchestra is directed to play a triumphal march as Egmont goes to the scaffold. But this is a very ineffectual way of telling what the action itself should have told, without the aid of the orchestra or the personal intervention of the author.

A melodramatic situation.

The weakness of the closing scene in "Egmont."

The pervading force which keeps all this loose organism together, which warms and animates it, is the character of Egmont. And here lies Goethe's *forte;* here his strength more than compensates for his weakness in the dramatic construction. A high-spirited, joyous, and easy-going knight, of a generous and affectionate nature, liberal in his judgment of himself and others, the idol of his people, — such a character afforded fine opportunities for an artist whose chief skill lay in psychological portrait-painting. We have seen in "Götz" and in "Werther" what a wide range of strong and vivid colors Goethe had on his palette, and with what exquisite, loving truthfulness he could model the features of his hero. The sensuous tangibility and brightness of Egmont's portrait would suffice to show (even if no incontestable dates were preserved) that it belongs to the period preceding his classical regener-

The character of Egmont.

ation. In fact, the tragedy was more than half written in Frankfort (1775–76), finished in Weimar (1782), and partly rewritten in Italy (1787).

Egmont not a rigid moralist.

Like Götz, Egmont is not a rigid moralist; he takes occasional liberties in his construction of some of the commandments. But as the poet depicts him, his faults appear hardly less lovable than his virtues; they all spring from the same genial, trusting disposition, which shrinks only from what is mean and sordid, and believes all the world as happy and generous as he is himself. He is therefore unable to grapple with a difficult situation; he temporizes, shuns radical measures, and falls an easy prey to the intrigues of the Duke of Alba, who, inviting him to his palace under the pretext of discussing with him the condition of the country, breaks faith with him and throws him into prison.

The characters of Clara,

The scenes in which Clara is introduced are little Dutch *genre*-pieces, such as Teniers and Van Ostade loved to paint; the same warm, vigorous tints, the same healthy joy in existence for its own sake. What a charming character is this simple, joyous, affectionate girl, who receives her courtly lover when the toil of the day is at an end, glories in his achievements and his popularity, bursts into innocent rapture over his splendid attire, and at last suddenly rises into heroism when the tidings reach her of his misfortune. Then the grumbling and indulgent old mother, who scolds good-naturedly at her daughter's conduct, but lacks determination to place any obstacle in her way; and the honest, rosy-cheeked Dutch lover, Brackenburg, whose robust affections refuse to be stifled by his knowledge of Clara's relation to Egmont: such portraits display a sturdy poetic realism and a disregard of romantic traditions which betray the hand of a great master.

and her old mother.

X.

I HAVE already indicated that Goethe, after his return from Italy, had the feeling that he had outgrown, or at least grown away from his German public. A new school of authors had risen into prominence, whose tendencies were repugnant to him. The violent declamatory style which had come into vogue with Schiller was in direct antagonism with the clear, tranquil classicism which he had accepted as his ideal of a literary form. He therefore began delving ever more deeply into science, and gave up all hope of again appealing to the public at large, as he had done in his early youth. Schiller's arrival in Weimar was an event which interested him but little; and at their first meeting, in September, 1788, Goethe's rigid, statesman-like manner disappointed and discouraged the younger poet, who had approached him with great expectations. A few weeks later appeared Schiller's review of "Egmont" in the "Literaturzeitung," which, without much ceremony, censured the dramatic weakness of the play, criticised its historic inaccuracy, but praised its richness in color and more especially the vividness and animation of the street scenes. Goethe read the review, and in his usual diplomatic style expressed a qualified approval of it in a letter to the duke. It is easy to read between the lines, however, that he was anything but pleased. A second interview followed, but without any important result; Schiller's disappointment grew more bitter, as he was forced to dismiss all hope of ever finding sympathy or encouragement in that quarter.

Goethe's alienation from his German public.

His aversion for the school represented by Schiller.

Schiller's review of "Egmont."

Goethe, however, possibly in order to remove him from his own immediate neighborhood, recommended him for a professorship at the University of Jena.

"It is truly pitiful," says Grimm,[1] "to observe how Schiller finally — for he removed immediately from Weimar to Jena — could no longer endure this maltreatment; pitiful, when we consider how Goethe in later years would willingly have bought with his own life every additional day of intercourse with Schiller."

Goethe's isolation in Weimar.

In the mean while Goethe's *liaison* with Christiane Vulpius had completely isolated him from the society of Weimar. His door was always open to strangers who, attracted by his fame, came to pay their homage; artists and naturalists from whom he could expect to learn something were especially welcome. In this way he strove to keep up his connection with the great world which still continued to interest him from afar. But for all that he lived intellectually in deep solitude; the devotion of Christiane and her sympathetic participation in his botanical studies could hardly compensate him for the loss of that high intellectual communion which, apart from all mere personal attachment, had dignified his relation to a Herder or a Frau von Stein. In 1790 he made a second brief journey to Italy, as the traveling companion of the duchess dowager, and returned to his old seclusion with Christiane and his scientific theories. Active and energetic as ever, he yet found an abundance of practical labor to employ his mind; in 1790 he was appointed superintendent of the grand-ducal institutions for the promotion of art and science, and in 1791 assumed the directorship of the Weimar stage. In 1792 he accompanied the duke on his campaign with the allied Austrian and Prussian armies in France, experienced the "cannon fever," and with scientific accuracy recorded his sensations. But all these experiences,

Second journey to Italy.

The campaign in France.

[1] Neunzehnte Vorlesung. Zweiter Band, pp. 128, 129.

interesting as they were in themselves, failed to touch his inner life and had little or no bearing upon his proper vocation as a poet. He was drifting farther and farther away from his old moorings, and some external force was needed to bring him back to them. This force, though long repelled, now at last asserted itself; it was Schiller.

In the year 1794 a literary enterprise of considerable magnitude occupied Schiller's mind, and he was naturally anxious to secure Goethe's coöperation. He therefore wrote the latter a very formal business letter, beginning with the usual pompously respectful formula which German etiquette required: *Hochwohlgeborner Herr, Hochzuverehrender Herr Geheimrath!* A prospectus of the proposed periodical, "Die Horen," was inclosed. Goethe answered with a friendly note, displaying much interest in the enterprise and promising to further it according to his ability. This was the beginning of the remarkable literary union between the two greatest authors of Germany, a union which endured without interruption until Schiller's death in 1805.

Schiller's periodical, "Die Horen."

Schiller secures Goethe's coöperation.

It was as a youthful, impassioned rhapsodist that Schiller had first gained the ear of the public, and in this capacity, it is safe to say, that Goethe disliked him. That the author of "The Robbers" and "Don Carlos" had by this time himself come to distrust his early ideals, and that he had completely outgrown the dithyrambic delirium of his first lyrics, Goethe did not know, or, apparently, did not care to know. What the world for the moment was doing was of very small consequence to him, compared to the eternal laws of nature which he was persistently tracking through a multitude of varied phenomena. What was the French Revolution compared to the typical plant, or Napoleon's conquest compared to the intermaxillary bone, which finally established the identity of the human skeleton with that of

Why Goethe at first disliked Schiller.

His scientific absorption.

the other mammals? Schiller, to whom this scientific absorption was incomprehensible, deeply regretted his rival's gradual estrangement from what he believed to be his proper calling. He had, as he afterwards confessed, long been watching the development of Goethe's genius from afar, and, it is to be inferred, had long yearned to establish a closer relation. Now he had, without sacrificing an inch of his dignity, in a half official way, as the editor of the forthcoming periodical, made the first step, and Goethe had with frank readiness advanced to meet him. It was now as easy for Schiller to extend his hand for a friendly grasp as it was natural for Goethe to respond with a hearty pressure. In that wonderful letter of August 23, 1794, the younger poet had, with that exquisite tact which was always so characteristic of him, analyzed the *modus operandi* of the elder's mind, showing himself nowhere obtrusive, subordinating himself readily to him, and yet without fearing to betray his consciousness of his own worth. How could Goethe help being pleased with such a letter? It proved to him that here was a man who was at least intellectually his peer, a man whose aspirations were lofty, and whose mind possessed an innate dignity and nobleness that raised him high above the more or less uncritical admirers with whom he had hitherto shared his best thoughts. It was not Goethe's habit to analyze his own mental processes or to reason concerning the methods by which he arrived at his poetic or scientific achievements; but it was a need of his nature to communicate itself; and could he afford to repel the advances of a man who betrayed so profound an insight as was, for instance, manifested in the following remarkable sentences: "You seek the laws of Nature, but you seek them on the most difficult road, which a man of less vigor would shun. You view Nature in her totality in order thereby to obtain light concerning each single phenomenon. In the totality

The two poets approach each other.

Common grounds of interest.

Extract from a letter from Schiller to Goethe.

of her phenomena you seek the interpretation (*Erklärungsgrund*) for the individual. From the simple organisms you rise, step by step, to the more complicated ones, in order to build up genetically, out of the materials of the whole edifice of Nature, the most complicated of all, man. By, as it were, repeating Nature's creative processes, you seek to penetrate into her hidden mechanism."

It is truly surprising that Schiller, who was a mere amateur in science, could have gained so clear an idea of the significance of Goethe's scientific labors.

Schiller's plan for his periodical.

It had long been a cherished plan of Schiller's to unite all the best authors of Germany in some great literary enterprise. Every author of any note, he reasoned, had his own special circle of readers; and if the interest of all these separate publics could be enlisted, the projected periodical would appeal to so large an audience that its success would at once be secured. It was on this hypothesis that "Die Horen" was founded.

The difficulties attending this plan.

The plan, however, involved many difficulties which the editor had not anticipated, and the success of the enterprise, although at first encouraging, was hardly equal to his expectations. Jealousies were ever active; many authors of very modest attainments who held influential positions (for instance, Dalberg) had to be conciliated, and some of the more prominent ones held aloof, wishing first to see what the periodical would amount to before they committed themselves; and finally, Goethe, whose promise of coöperation had made Schiller very sanguine, withheld for a while his best work, and contributed at first merely translations and old stories remodeled so as to fit into new frames. The novel of "Wilhelm Meister," which Schiller had hoped to secure, had already been promised to a publisher, and the fragment of "Faust," which had long slumbered in a sealed package, Goethe feared to touch because he lacked the courage and the spirits to finish it to his own satisfaction. Schil-

Goethe's contributions.

ler had then, during the first year, to content himself with "The Conversations of German Emigrants" ("Die Unterhaltungen Deutscher Ausgewanderten"), a series of old tales, borrowed from various sources, very admirably told, to be sure, but offending nevertheless against an important clause in the prospectus, which excluded political discussion. The story-tellers are German refugees from beyond the Rhine, whom the French Revolution has compelled to seek safety on the estate of a certain Baroness von C. They enliven the enforced monotony of their existence, like the pilgrims of Chaucer, and the refugees from the pestilence in Boccaccio's "Decameron," by recounting wonderful tales, and occasionally disputing concerning the significance of the revolution which has driven them into exile. To one who reads these conversations at the present time, the conclusion is irresistible that if any one but Goethe had been their author, they would have been suffered to die without regret, like so much of the ephemeral literature which not even a distinguished name suffices to keep alive.

"The Conversations of German Emigrants."

Of far greater value, because containing much more original thought, was the essay on Literary Sansculottism; and the "Roman Elegies" have deservedly a place among the classical poems of the German language. It is his relation to Christiane which Goethe has here idealized in sonorous hexameters, — hexameters that breathe the fresh, sensuous joy and *naïveté* of the ancient Greek rather than the Roman civilization. In their *morale* these elegies remind one of Theocritus, or perhaps more directly of Bion and Moschus. Propertius, however, is believed to have been Goethe's nearest model, and there are terms and phrases which occasionally recall Tibullus. The poet spends the long nights with his merry little maiden, whose external characteristics are entirely those of Christiane; he watches

Essay on Literary Sansculottism.

"Roman Elegies."

Goethe's models.

The subject of the elegies Goethe's relation to Christiane Vulpius.

eagerly for her approaching footsteps, in his impatience ordering his servant to light the lamp and close the shutters before the sun has yet set; with innocent little artifices he deceives the old uncle who watches over her; and while she rests in gentle slumber at his side, he often lightly drums the measure of the hexameter on her beautiful shoulder.[1] These, and a great many other details, stated with incredible directness, naturally shocked a number of the poet's admirers, who questioned the propriety of such an undisguised avowal of a relation which our northern civilization, at all events, has never legitimized. It was obviously to preclude this criticism that Goethe removed the scene of the elegies to Rome, where a remnant of the antique joy in existence is yet lingering. Among the still remaining monuments of the ancient world, the broken sculptured friezes and shattered columns, and in the presence of the glorious marble gods, these warm pictures of the poet and his beloved are by no means out of tune. They seem rather like some fragment of an ancient bas-relief suddenly melted into words.

The Roman background a device to preclude criticism.

Goethe's next contributions to "Die Horen" were a translation of Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography," and a series of letters from a Swiss journey, undertaken in the autumn of 1779. Both were moderately successful, but failed to give any indication of that "new spring" which Goethe promised himself from his association with Schiller.

Goethe's translation of Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography.

In the "Musenalmanach," another of Schiller's enterprises, which began to appear in 1795, the results of their literary union were more clearly discernible. Besides a number of songs and ballads, old and new, appeared that charming idyl, "Alexis and Dora," which Schiller,

"Alexis and Dora."

[1] Oftmals hab' ich auch schon in ihren Armen gedichtet
Und des Hexameters Maass, leise mit fingernder Hand,
Ihr auf den Rücken gezählt.
Römische Elegien, V.

in his editorial capacity, hailed as one of the most beautiful poems that Goethe had ever written. It is composed, like the "Roman Elegies," in alternate hexameters and pentameters, and depicts the feelings of a Greek youth at parting from his beloved, whose favor he has gained shortly before bidding her farewell. It is so purely Greek in color and sentiment, that were it not Goethe who had written it, one might be tempted to look for some Greek original from the best classical period.

XI.

THE first step having once been taken, the friendship of Goethe and Schiller developed easily and naturally, growing daily firmer and more intimate. It was no fervid and youthfully enthusiastic attachment, but a deliberate union, based on intellectual kinship and community of interests. Sentiment had at first very little to do with it; their personalities at their first meetings had mutually repelled rather than attracted each other. Goethe's stiffness and stately bearing had disappointed Schiller, and the latter's sickly appearance and his fondness for tobacco had not served to prepossess the former in his favor. Their intellectual kinship, too, covered a multitude of dissimilarities; it was their aims and aspirations, perhaps, that were akin rather than their natures. The public had persisted in looking upon them as rivals, as leaders of opposing factions, and in this the public was not far wrong. Their literary tendencies too, as already indicated, were widely divergent: the one calmly absorbed in the laws of reality, and creating with the grand and earnest serenity of Nature herself, the other in arms against reality, clamoring for freedom, and venting the hot feelings of his overcharged heart in impassioned dramatic rhapsodies; the one the interpreter of the harmony of existence, the other of its discord. Nevertheless the activity of both was equally legitimate; both were great, noble, and sincere men, and as such could meet, in spite of all the forces that dragged them apart, on a sufficiently high plane of being to view their dissimilarities as small and evanescent, compared to the great aims which they pursued in common.

Growing attachment between Goethe and Schiller.

Their dissimilarities.

Goethe's and Schiller's correspondence.

The correspondence of Goethe and Schiller, extending over a period of nearly eleven years (1794–1805), is one of the most precious legacies which ever two men of genius bequeathed to their nation. The impression one is likely to derive from a first reading of these letters is that they are singularly undemonstrative, and, considering the intimate relations between the writers, a little more formal than one might have expected. Goethe, who some twenty years earlier had unceremoniously addressed the Countess von Stalberg, whom he had then never seen, with *Du* and *Gustchen*, here uniformly employs toward his dearest friend the respectful *Sie*. But this certainly implied no want of affection. We observe in him after his return from Italy a determination to break with his old unrestrained and passionate self, manifesting itself especially in an increased respect for the external formalities of life. Thus, in his letters to the duke, he never resumes his former cordial tone, but persists in viewing their relation simply as that of a subject to his sovereign. And yet no one would maintain that his feelings toward the duke had undergone any sudden change. To the serious, matured man it was no longer natural to receive even those who were dearest to him, as it were, in mental dishabille; the stately reserve, however, with which he habitually surrounded himself made his intimacy tenfold precious to those few who succeeded in gaining and keeping it. And among these few Schiller was the foremost. If there was any man whom Goethe may be said to have admitted into the inner sanctuary of his mind, it was surely he. With what profound satisfaction he unfolds to him his literary projects! how readily and in what a friendly spirit he accepts his hints and recognizes the force of his criticisms! It is very beautiful to see how affectionately each explores the other's mind, adapting himself to the other's peculiarities, and

Their respectful attitude toward each other implies no want of affection.

An intellectual friendship.

Their gentleness and courtesy.

where they disagree with what a gentleness and courtesy they deal with each other's differences; then the steady, unselfish devotion of each to the other's interest, and the unaffected joy with which each hails the other's achievements.

Schiller appears everywhere, in spite of his feeble health, as the more active and enterprising of the two; for Schiller was purely a poet, and the whole force of his being flowed in a full, strong current, with no side-streams to divert his strength from the one object to which he had devoted his life. Goethe never saw him or exchanged thoughts with him without receiving a stimulus to new poetic achievements. It was his oft-expressed admiration and profound comprehension of "Faust" which induced Goethe to open the sealed package and complete the masterpiece of his life, ere yet even his sympathy with the Titanic aspirations from which it had sprung was irrevocably gone. A beautiful testimony to their friendship is the long epistolary discussion of "Wilhelm Meister," the last five books of which were written after 1794, and especially that glorious letter of July 2, 1796, in which Schiller preliminarily pronounces his judgment upon the completed work (First Part).

Schiller stimulates Goethe to poetic activity.

"I shall entirely devote the next four months to it" (the study of the romance), he says, "and with joy. Moreover, it is one of the greatest pieces of good fortune in my life, that I have lived to see the completion of this work, that it has appeared within the period of my creative activity, so that I can yet draw from this pure fountain. And the beautiful relation which exists between us makes it, in a certain way, a religion with me to make your cause my own as regards this book, to develop whatever there is that is real in me into the clearest mirror of the spirit which breathes through this volume, and thus in a higher sense deserve the name of your friend."

Schiller's opinion of "Wilhelm Meister."

Two great poets who stood thus closely united, and who, although from very different premises, had reached similar conclusions regarding all the vital questions pertaining to their art, could not well be regarded with indifference by the great herd of mediocre scribblers who are ever moving the public with rhymed or prose recitals of their shallow sentiments and emotions. These two men, with their earnest striving for the noblest form in art, and the innate loftiness of their own thought, must have been a continual rebuke to the contented dilettanteism of their literary brethren. They had set up a higher standard of taste, which is always sure to be resented by those who are constitutionally incapable of reaching it. The public at large, too, which had found the shallow entertainment which it desired in Wieland's chatty and easy-going journal, "Der Deutsche Merkur," paid little heed to Schiller's seriously æsthetic discussions in "Die Horen," and Goethe's artistic Hellenism it regarded with absolute indifference. "Die Horen" was met on every side with the bitterest censure, perhaps not in every instance undeserved; and the editor, wearied by the persistent hostility of his critics, at last abandoned the enterprise. But it is hardly to be wondered at that he refused to submit in silence to the steady misrepresentation and the puerile attacks of which he had been made the subject. With his friend at his side he felt himself strong enough to deal a counter-blow at his literary enemies; and this he did in a series of satirical epigrams, published in his "Musenalmanach" for 1797.

Jealousy on the part of minor authors.

Indifference of the public.

Persistent hostility of the critics.

The first idea for "Die Xenien" probably emanated from Schiller;[1] and Goethe, who had his own score to pay off, eagerly signified his willingness to bear

"Die Xenien."

[1] I am aware that this point has been contested. See Emil Palleske: *Schiller's Leben und Werke.* Zweiter Band, pp. 370, 371. Neunte Auflage. Stuttgart, 1877.

his share of the labor and the responsibility. Their first purpose was merely to punish the periodicals and journals which had shown themselves especially bitter and unjust in their hostility to "Die Horen," but the original plan gradually assumed the dimensions of a systematic literary campaign. While in no wise shunning personalities, they agreed to dignify their undertaking by making it a general warfare against pretentious mediocrity, charlatanism, and dilettanteism, and by striking chiefly at those men who represented these pernicious tendencies within the national literature. It is, perhaps, to be regretted that they did not adhere quite rigidly enough to this purpose, and in some few instances attacked rather wantonly men who were either dead, like George Forster, or, like Klopstock, too old to exert any pernicious influence. On the other hand, the warfare of the "Xenien" assumes a far greater importance from the fact that the two assailants did not content themselves with merely attacking, but took pains at every step to fortify their own position by stating in incisive and impressive epigrams what they themselves conceived to be sound theories of art. The onslaught, which even without this would have been justifiable, thus became a fight for true principles against all species of mannerism and affectation which had been rampant in German literature since the days of Opitz and Gottsched. Therefore the effect of the "Xenien," as far as posterity is concerned, was a wholly beneficial one. It routed from the German Parnassus a host of pretenders, whose impotent invocations in prose and verse might otherwise have lulled the gracious Muses to sleep, or driven them away from the soil of the Fatherland.

Warfare against false tendencies within the national literature;

and a fight for sound principles.

"Die Xenien" are thoroughly characteristic specimens of German wit; they strike rather than sting. They have not the keen stiletto point of the French epigram. They are too overcharged with

Characteristic specimens of German wit.

thought, too ponderous, to have a very sharp edge. Some of them are even half argumentative, and are designed to convince rather than to wound. While lashing what is feeble and shallow, they accord due credit to what is noble and great. Thus, for instance, the distich on Lessing: —

Epigram on Lessing.

"In thy life-time we honored thee as a god of Olympus;
Now thou art dead, but thy spirit over the spirits still reigns."

It is needless to enumerate the many now forgotten authors against whom these epigrammatic attacks were aimed. Worst of all fared, perhaps, the ancient Nicolai, the bookseller in Berlin, who, innocently believing himself to be Lessing's literary executor, continued to arraign before his tribunal every rising author of the land. There was a certain admirable, bland impertinence in his manner of dispensing his well-worn pragmatical maxims about reason and morality and utility, and Goethe and Schiller had both been the victims of his feeble satire. Among the many epigrams devoted to him, this is one of the best: —

Attacks on Nicolai.

Epigram on Nicolai.

"If you had imagination and sentiment, wit and some judgment,
Truly a Wieland or Lessing would still be surviving in you."

The following "Xenion," directed against Count G. C. Stolberg, would apply very well to Voss's idyl, "Louise," where the parson and his amiable family divide their time about equally between eating and didactic conversation: —

"Xenion" against Count von Stolberg.

"King Belshazzar feasts in the first act, and lo, in the second
Feasts the king, and thus to the end continues he feasting."

Here is a well-deserved blow at a certain Hermes, a writer of piously voluptuous romances: —

"If you would please the children of this world, and also the pious,
Paint voluptuous sin — with the Devil close at its side."

Here a distich on Kant and his interpreters: —

Kant and his interpreters.

"How by a single rich man of beggars a host are subsisting!
When the kings build castles, the draymen get something to do."

"The Prophet" and "The Teleologist."

The epigrams on Lavater, entitled "The Prophet" and "The Teleologist," are more forcible than elegant; one recognizes in them Goethe's fierce disgust at the supermundane traffic in which his former friend was engaged: —

THE PROPHET.

"Oh, what a pity that Nature one man but made out of you, friend!
Besides for an honest man, there was also the stuff for a rogue."

THE TELEOLOGIST.

"Oh, what honor deserves the Creator because in his mercy,
When he created the cork-tree, he also invented the cork!"

Uproar in the camp of the Philistines.

That these "foxes with firebrands in their tails," as the forty-third "Xenion" styles the collection, made a tremendous uproar in the camp of the Philistines, is not to be wondered at. Plans of vengeance immediately began to agitate the hostile ranks, and the most contemptible personalities, allusions to Goethe's domestic relations, and sneers at Schiller for receiving the bounty of a prince, were resorted to, but by the time these responses reached the two friends, they were both too deeply absorbed in some new labor to have any ear for the howl of the revengeful mob. Goethe was just completing the first part of "Wilhelm Meister," and Schiller had nearly finished his preparatory studies for "Wallenstein." They had resolved to bear jointly the responsibility of the authorship of "Die Xenien," and never to attach their names individually to any of the epigrams. Not many years ago, however, the original manuscript was discovered, and edited by Maltzahn, thus enabling one in most instances to give to each author his due.

Joint responsibility.

XII.

TO "Wilhelm Meister," as indeed to all the more ambitious works of Goethe (perhaps with the single exception of "Hermann and Dorothea"), applies the maxim of the poet in the prelude to "Faust:"

"Wilhelm Meister."

> "Oft, reluctant years its warrant sealing,
> Its perfect stature stands at last confessed!
> What dazzles for the moment spends its spirit:
> What 's genuine shall posterity inherit."

The germ of a great work with him (at first merely a small uncompounded but living protoplasm of thought) develops slowly and gradually through a series of perfecting evolutions, by some strong organic process assimilating to itself the most heterogeneous elements of his inner and outer life. Thus from the years 1776–1777 "Wilhelm Meister" was a potential existence, a nucleus of thought around which much mental vitality gradually gathered. In the summer of 1778 the first book was finished; then a long period of silent, perhaps unconscious labor, but no visible progress. In 1782 the result appears in the writing of two more books, and during the two following years the story continues to grow, though in a somewhat desultory fashion. In 1785 what was according to the original plan the sixth book was completed, but by the condensing process to which the work was later subjected these six books were reduced to what in the printed edition constitutes the first four. During the Italian journey the romance still silently grew with its author, and several allusions to it in his

First conception of the work and its progress.

Silent growth of the romance.

letters to the friends in Weimar show that amid the many distracting sights and studies "Meister" was never quite forgotten. After his return, however, the new scientific interests pushed it into the background, and it was not until after his more intimate acquaintance with Schiller (1795) that the labor upon the romance was resumed. To be sure, it was in the first months of 1794 that Goethe had resolved to print it serially, and to dispose of it to a bookseller; but it is doubtful whether, with his habits of work, this daring resolution would have been carried out, if Schiller's lively interest and profound criticisms had not continually stimulated his friend, and kept the subject of Wilhelm's fate ever warm in his mind. The whole work was finally published in October, 1796.

during the Italian journey.

Schiller's interest hastens the progress of the work.

The watchword of Goethe's life was culture, and his own unwearied striving for the highest possible type of manhood (the Greek καλοκἀγαθία) is the key-note, the omnipresent theme which is always audible through all the manifold brilliant variations with which he is ever delighting and bewildering his audience. And still I should be loath to accept Goethe's declaration as final that Wilhelm Meister is his own poetic counterpart. It is one phase of his character, and perhaps the most important phase, which he has here vividly portrayed. Meister is Goethe, but not all of Goethe; not the Goethe who impressed the stamp of his vigorous thought upon the science and literature of the century. Meister, with all his amiability and half instinctive generosity, is essentially a eudemonist; the motive force of his life is the most refined intellectual selfishness. With a vague desire for culture, he drifts leisurely through existence, allowing the varied scenes and circumstances which he encounters to exert their influence upon him, while he notes with apparent satisfaction his progress from one stage of devel-

The key-note and theme of "Wilhelm Meister."

Doubtful whether Meister is Goethe's poetic counterpart.

Intellectual selfishness.

opment to another. To him family, church, state, and all the ties which bind ordinary mortals have no existence.

Absence of religion and patriotism.

That the religion then taught in Germany did not satisfy a mind of his type is, perhaps, not to be wondered at; and the German state in the higher sense of a conscious national unity is a growth of a later day; but the family has always been the nucleus of German strength and virtue, and the family ties have always been exceptionally strong. Nevertheless, after his father's death, Wilhelm recognizes no obligations devolving upon him as the head of his house. He continues his life of picturesque vagabondism, flirts with actresses, and troubles himself very little about the effects of his own actions upon anybody but himself. On the whole he seems incapable of strong emotions; he is too hopelessly cultivated either to love or to hate with any special intensity. He regards the world with all its laws, those of morality included, from a purely æsthetic point of view and, with due allowance for national likes and dislikes, values his fellow-men merely as accessories to himself, as half impersonal elements entering more or less perceptibly into the sum total of his being.

Regards reality from a purely æsthetic point of view.

The eighteenth century, culminating, as it did, in the French Revolution, was preëminently the age of individualism. In Germany, as in France, church and state were disorganized. Leibnitz, Lessing, and Kant had successively labored to undermine the foundation upon which Lutheran orthodoxy rested; and among the upper classes it was now little more than an official fact, at all events, no longer a vital belief. Hence the curious phenomenon that in a romance which purports to be a truthful and comprehensive picture of the life of the times we find no trace of a definite faith, except in the journal of a departed ancestress, and even there in a semi-æsthetic form. That Buddhism or Mohammedanism was not the official religion of Ger-

The eighteenth century the age of individualism.

Æsthetic religion.

many during the eighteenth century could not be positively deduced from the book; although, perhaps, the absence of legitimized polygamy may be accepted as inferential proof. As for the state, its existence may also be inferred from the fact that life and property appear to be very safe, and the moral anarchy which prevails among certain aristocratic circles is not of the sort which comes within the reach of the civil law. Public spirit, desire for civic distinction or usefulness, and patriotism in the higher sense are motives which we nowhere encounter. It is very significant that Werner, the typical merchant, remarks to the nobleman Lothario that he has never in his life had a thought of the state, and has paid his taxes merely because custom requires it. This proves conclusively that the absence of all public life in the book is no accidental omission; on the contrary, the author intended to emphasize it as a characteristic phase of the life of the times. And further proof is afforded by a number of epigrams in "Die Xenien," in almost all of which Goethe's hand is easily recognizable. The following one, entitled "The German National Character," might appropriately have been placed as a motto on the title-page of "Wilhelm Meister": —

Absence of individual responsibility.

Characteristic phases of the life of the times.

"Xenion" on the German national character.

> "Into a nation to form you, ye Germans, the hope is a vain one;
> Hence, the more freely develop, as individual men."

The "Xenion" on the German empire reflects with equal force the same sentiment: —

> "Where is the German land? I know not where am I to find it.
> Political Germany ceases where the learned begins."

There can be no doubt, then, that the picture which Goethe gives is historically correct, although, as Julian Schmidt asserts, somewhat incomplete. Before the birth of the modern industrial state, men felt themselves, not as responsible members of a polit-

The picture historically correct.

ical society, but merely as individual men, and they went in pursuit of wealth or pleasure or culture on the path which to their individual tastes and temperament appeared the most attractive. Hence the total want of moral and social responsibility which characterizes the hero as well as all the inferior actors in "Wilhelm Meister." A need of association was nevertheless indefinitely felt, and this found vent in all sorts of mysterious societies devoted to fantastic objects. A secret society of this order, a sort of freemasonry of culture, plays quite an important part in the latter half of the book; but wherein its beneficial effect upon Wilhelm's character consisted, except perhaps in affording him a chance of associating on more intimate terms with noblemen, is not satisfactorily explained. We learn that Wilhelm had long labored with an energy worthy of a better cause to acquire those external graces of manner and bearing which distinguish the nobleman from the common citizen. But unfortunately these graces are never acquired by conscious effort. It is one of the distressing facts of life that nobility of soul does not always clothe itself in a noble body, nor express itself in noble manners.

Wilhelm's efforts to acquire a noble bearing.

In Germany especially, the sharp distinction between the bourgeois and the nobleman gave the latter an enormous advantage over the former. The continual necessity of bowing out customers, transmitted from generation to generation, becomes at last a psychological inheritance and produces souls with crooked or abnormally flexible spines. The nobleman, on the other hand, acquires mentally as physically that rigid erectness (with perhaps a slight backward tendency) which is the natural attitude of one who, with a long procession of stately ancestors behind him, has been in the habit of receiving homage. The social fabric in a semi-feudal state like Germany is a hard and, in its relation to the individual, unalterable fact. It compels even from the proudest a reluctant recognition. And to a free soul it must be a perpetual

The external advantages of the nobleman over the bourgeois.

humiliation to be thus ever placed at a disadvantage by those who, perhaps, in genuine manly worth are infinitely one's inferiors. This may serve to explain why the author devotes so much space to a subject which a transatlantic reader is apt to deem of so small account.

Wilhelm had grown up in a narrow Philistine world where honesty, punctuality, and many other solid virtues flourished. Trade was the central interest of life, and art and literature were rated only according to their money value. Nothing ever happened to lift the mind momentarily out of its drowsy, humdrum routine, and the good citizens, no doubt, were thankful that no such thing ever did happen. But Wilhelm, although a merchant's son and educated to succeed to his father's extensive business, had not a merchant's soul. In his childhood his chief delight had been a puppet theatre, for which he had dramatized scenes from the Bible history, the only large events which had then come to his notice, and King Saul and David with their magniloquent speech and anachronistic costumes had for the time made him forget the dreary, colorless world in which his birth had placed him. One is here reminded of the similar passages in Goethe's autobiography where he descants on the pleasure he himself as a child took in the imaginary doings of his theatrical puppets. As Wilhelm grew up, one of his first exploits was, naturally enough, to fall in love with an actress, Marianne, who loved him in return, after her fashion, and granted him a brief season of extreme felicity. As he was about to start on a business journey, he discovered that she had been unfaithful to him, which revelation, however, did not affect him very seriously.

Wilhelm's aversion for the Philistine world of his childhood.

Dramatizes scenes from the Bible.

Falls in love with the actress, Marianne.

In glaring contrast to the colorless respectability of the Philistine world is the gay and animated vagabondism of the strolling actors whom we encounter in the second book. To unravel the

The vagabondism of the strolling actors.

many intricate entanglements of the plot, from this point on, would be too formidable a task, especially as the author himself does not in every instance come to the reader's assistance. Without troubling himself further about his business obligations, Wilhelm joins this wandering troop, and has a series of entertaining but not always proper adventures. The ideal side of his nature, which in his early life had been ignored, is now to have full sway. In spite of all the meanness, jealousies, and dissoluteness which he is forced to observe, he resolves to become an actor. He has sufficient faith in himself to believe that he can lift the profession which he adopts into the higher ideal sphere in which he breathes and has his being. Among the many characters which are here introduced is a certain beautiful actress, Philine, a paragon of fascinating impropriety, who makes Wilhelm the victim of her most persistent devotion; and it is certainly to his credit that he resolutely resists her advances. Philine is also involved in a tender relation (then in an incipient state) to Frederic, a young boy of noble family, who has run away from home, and Wilhelm, while still yearning for his faithless Marianne, is unconsciously the object of the adoration of Mignon, a strange Italian child whom he has saved from the maltreatment of a brutal trapeze performer. Later on in the narrrative, the noble ladies Theresa and Nathalie each in her turn, bestow their hearts upon him with more or less ardor, and the state of everybody's affections becomes so problematic that the reader is in continual danger of misplacing his sympathies, and in the end hardly knows what unions would be the most or the least satisfactory. I do not say this disparagingly, but merely to express a very natural bewilderment, which is apt to seize one amid the ever growing complications with which every fresh chapter surprises one. There can be no doubt that the author's interest in the plot, as such, flagged toward the end, and his correspondence with Schiller

Search for an ideal life.

Affectional complications.

plainly shows that he was often himself at a loss to know how to solve the many knots which he had tied.

The chief interest of the work, however, does not lie so much in the plot as in the marvelously realistic pictures of life and character which it is continually introducing. Even the apparent aimlessness and the hopeless intricacy of the story have their significance, as being in a measure symbolic of the confused groping and the chaotic multiformity of life in a transitional age, which had drifted away from the moorings of the feudal past without having gained the anchorage of the industrial present. In order to understand Goethe's romance completely, one should read Freytag's "Debit and Credit" ("Soll und Haben"), which is its proper complement, and depicts with equal fidelity the state of German society half a century later. The great industrial revolution, effacing the boundary line between *bourgeoisie* and nobility, to which the modern novelist introduces us, will then appear as the logical conclusion of the premises with which "Wilhelm Meister" so abundantly furnishes us. That Goethe, with all his admiration for the poetic attributes of the feudal institutions, did not deceive himself in the tendencies of modern history, that he clearly perceived the waning importance of the nobility in the modern state, is obvious enough to any one who is skilled in reading between the lines. In the first place, the many marriages between plebeians and patricians, with which the romance closes, show a profound disregard of all feudal traditions. Then again the manner in which especially the first noble circle in the third book is described is very significant; the dignity of bearing which distinguishes the count, the baron, and the rest is not represented as the result of innate dignity of soul. Their glittering exteriors cover a multitude of petty foibles. Shallow pedantry, capriciousness, and licentious-

The hopeless intricacy of the plot.

Freytag's "Debit and Credit" the proper complement to "Wilhelm Meister."

The author clearly perceives the tendencies of modern history.

Marriages between patricians and plebeians.

ness everywhere bear witness to the hollowness of their pretensions. Their wealth and position have given them ample leisure to cultivate the amenities of life, which the hard-working citizen is obliged to neglect; hence on a brief acquaintance they are apt to dazzle a novice like Wilhelm, and impress him with the conviction that here at last the ideal life is to be found. But the sequel proves that the author in no wise shares this opinion.

The hollowness of aristocratic pretensions.

In spite of all temporary disappointments Wilhelm is not yet discouraged in his search for the ideal. In the fourth and fifth books we are again introduced to the theatrical world, in which the hero now makes his *début* as a professional actor. It must be a glorious pursuit, he thinks, to interpret the noblest thoughts of the greatest poets. Reality seemed so hard and barren, so devoid of poetry; but here was a sphere of life, lifted above the mean humdrum earth, resonant with large deeds and mighty speech. Surely here the ideal life was to be found. Something of the spirit of kings and heroes would surely descend upon the actor who speaks their speech and thinks their thought, and would make him daily worthier of their high companionship. Thus, no doubt, reasoned Wilhelm, like many another impulsive enthusiast who in the heat of the primal conception forgets the harsh details and the slow toil which are the concomitants, if not the indispensable foundation of every high achievement. He has, as usual, no aim beyond himself. His usefulness to the public, whose servant the actor is, does not enter into his calculations. That the actor must subdue and momentarily conquer his own individuality in order worthily to represent the conception of the poet does not occur to him. He therefore achieves his one triumph in the character of Hamlet, which he has thoroughly studied, and which is closely akin to his own. Goethe's celebrated criticism of Hamlet, which is laid in

Wilhelm's *début* as an actor.

His unfitness for the stage.

His one triumph.

Wilhelm's mouth, occupies a large portion of the fourth and fifth books.

Wilhelm soon discovers his unfitness for the stage, but is not yet satisfied that the ideal life is beyond his reach. The basis of his reasoning, however, is now radically changed. Experience has made him wise. Instead of ignoring and despising the so-called barren reality, he begins to discover its dignity and beauty. Instead of seeking his ideal outside of and above it, he seeks it in a proper subjection of himself to his surroundings, — not in self-expansion, but in self-limitation. It is really the problem of "Faust" which is here returning in a slightly modified form. The author shows that there was something fantastic and morbid in this eager chase for an ideal existence which is supposed to be irreconcilable with the conditions of life with which fate has surrounded one. The first lesson which such an idealist has to learn is to estimate, not himself, but reality at its proper worth; to bring himself into accord with the world, and not the world with him. This necessity of self-limitation is a theme which Goethe is ever emphasizing, and which is ever recurring in his writings. But nowhere is it more clearly expressed than in that glorious little poem entitled "Natur und Kunst": —

Perseveres in his search for the ideal life.

Proper subjection of the individual to reality.

Sonnet on Nature and Art.

"Vergebens werden ungebundne Geister
Nach der Vollendung reiner Höhe streben.
Wer Groszes will, musz sich zusammen raffen;
In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister,
Und das Gesetz nur kann uns Freiheit geben."

The sixth book contains the "Confessions of a Fair Spirit" ("Bekentnisse einer schönen Seele"), the material of which the author drew from his recollections of the kind friend of his youth, Fraulein von Klettenberg, whose religious enthusiasm had once appealed strongly to him and influenced him in many ways. She is here represented as the ancestress of the

"Confessions of a Fair Spirit."

noble family among whom the scene of the last two books is laid. The nobleman Lothario, who is the centre of this circle, has traveled far and wide, and in the school of experience gradually emancipated himself from the traditions of his rank. He is a man of varied culture and worldly wisdom, who unites with a free and dignified presence many sterling qualities of heart and mind. He has a presentiment that the nobility cannot long maintain their position in modern society without throwing overboard their claim to inherited superiority, and joining with the industrial classes in earnest labor for the welfare of the state. In his circle, therefore, every one has his appointed sphere of beneficent activity; and Wilhelm, who during these many years of trials and disappointments has unconsciously gained a larger view of life, and that dignity of presence which he had so ardently desired, is now received as an equal among equals in this society and takes an active part in all its pursuits and interests. After a brief *affaire du cœur* with a lady named Theresa, whom Lothario afterwards marries, he gains the hand of the latter's sister Nathalie. It is to be regretted that the character of this lady, as well as that of her whole circle, is less vigorously conceived, and far less realistically described than, for instance, that of Philine and Laertes and their whole troop of gay vagabonds.

Lothario.

The proper position of the nobility in the modern state.

H. Hettner has very appropriately called "Wilhelm Meister,"[1] "the Odyssey of Culture; an adventurous pilgrimage through the most manifold and dangerous rocks; but a pilgrimage with a happy return home."

An Odyssey of culture.

"Wilhelm[2] went in search of the art of acting, but he conquered the art of living. He sought the idealism of

[1] *Goethe und Schiller.* Von H. Hettner. Zweite Abtheilung, p. 114. Braunschweig, 1876.

[2] Ibid. p. 124.

beautiful appearances, and found the idealism of a beautiful reality. He went to seek his father's asses and he found a kingdom."

The pathetic history of Mignon and the harper and the various other sub-intrigues of the plot, I have been obliged to pass over in silence, as they do not in any perceptible degree affect the tendency or the philosophical value of the romance.

Sub-intrigues.

"Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre,"[1] although not published until many years later (1821), still continues to deal with the same social problems, the existence of which is rather indicated than expressly stated in the "Lehrjahre." Nevertheless it was these which by their impalpable presence invested the wandering hero and his doings with something more than an individual interest. He was a type, a representative of thousands, who were groping about like him in search of some vaguely divined better state, call it culture, ideal, or whatever name may seem to fit best in each individual case. It was at all events a noble aim, blindly and instinctively pursued, and through a hundred aberrations at last reached.

"Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre"

Further development of the same problems.

"Die Wanderjahre" bears the significant sub-title, "Die Entsagenden" (the renouncing ones, renunciation); the theme is no longer the bold self-assertion of the individual against society, but his voluntary subordination to society, no longer the pursuit of selfish happiness, but the pursuit of usefulness. This tendency is carried out with such a consistency that the *dramatis personæ* are scarcely recognizable in their capacity as individuals, but appear as half impersonal elements, laboring with machine-like regularity for the accomplishment of the common good. It

Eudemonism and altruism.

The *dramatis personæ* imperfectly individualized.

[1] I have preferred in this case to depart from the strict chronological order, as the *Wanderjahre*, being a continuation of the *Lehrjahre*, ought properly be discussed in connection with the latter.

need hardly be told that this detracts much from the interest of the story as such, making the whole appear as a philosophical allegory, the meaning of which is but dimly visible amid the great mass of irrelevant matter with which the slender plot is incumbered. Half a dozen novelettes, some of which (for instance, "The Flight to Egypt" and "The Beautiful Melusine") are in themselves very attractive, but whose bearing upon the story is rather remote, are interpolated here and there in a somewhat arbitrary manner. As a device for disposing of old manuscripts, this method may be commendable, but it is hardly worthy of so great an artist as Goethe.

The morale of "Die Wanderjahre."

The total result of the book may be summed up as follows: The spirit of the *bourgeoisie* displaces that of the ancient feudal nobility. The nobles strive to make themselves indispensable to the state by devoting their wealth, their culture, and their influence to industrial enterprises of national importance. They claim consideration no longer as members of a privileged class, but as useful and energetic citizens. Wilhelm becomes a physician, thus returning to a life of civic activity and seeking his ideal existence in the sphere which he had once so heartily despised. Even the frivolous Philine, as Frederic's wife, makes an honest effort to become a sedate matron, curbs her butterfly temperament, and learns to spin and sew and cut clothes.

Hæc fabula docet that happiness is a fleeting will-o'-the-wisp, which is not caught by him who starts in conscious pursuit of it. The nearest approach to it which the world affords is found in self-forgetfulness, in earnest labor for the common good.

XIII.

JULY 21, 1797, Schiller wrote to Goethe's friend, the painter Meyer,[1] "We have not been inactive, especially our friend [Goethe] who in these last years has really surpassed himself. His epic poem you have read; you will admit that it represents the culmination of his and of all our modern art. I have watched its growth and have wondered no less at the manner of its creation than at the work itself. While we others must collect laboriously and feel our way, he needs only gently to shake the tree, and the most beautiful fruits fall, ripe and heavy, into his lap. It is incredible with what ease he now reaps in himself the fruits of a well-spent life and assiduous self-culture, how significant and sure all his steps are, how his knowledge of himself and of reality preserves him from all groping about and futile endeavor."

Schiller's letter to Meyer concerning "Hermann and Dorothea."

"Hermann and Dorothea," the poem here referred to, is so well known and has been so amply commented upon that little remains to do except to indorse the opinions of former critics. Voss, the translator of Homer, had in 1795 published a rural idyl in hexameters, describing the daily life of a country parson who has a healthy digestion, a virtuous family, and an irrepressible habit of delivering sermons on the smallest possible provocation. This poem, entitled "Louise," which to a non-German reader appears extremely prosy, has, however, the merit of having first revealed the poetic aspects of the calm, uneventful existence in a German country village; and it is not incred-

"Hermann and Dorothea."

Voss's rural idyl, "Louise."

[1] Quoted from Hettner, vol. ii. pp. 231, 232.

ible that it may have suggested to Goethe, to whom it was well known, the first idea of "Hermann and Dorothea." The story itself, or rather the merest skeleton of it, he derived from an incident of the Salzburg emigration, occasioned by the religious zeal of the Archbishop Firmian, who in the year 1732 confronted his Protestant subjects with the alternative between adoption of the Catholic faith and emigration.

The nearest approach to an epic.

"Hermann and Dorothea" is the nearest approach to an epic that modern German literature has to show. The narrative is everywhere characterized by a plastic simplicity and an epic calmness which suggest Homer. What Hettner says of Goethe's and Schiller's writings in general applies with special force to this marvelous idyl: "It is renaissance in the highest and best sense." The Homeric epithets with which each canto abounds, and which in the works of any other poet would appear somewhat discordant, have here the most delightful effect. It is by no mere trickery of words that Goethe has succeeded in giving to his work this rare Greek flavor. In expressions like "der wohlumzäunete Weinberg," "die wohlgezimmerten Scheunen," "der verständige Jüngling," "geflügelte Worte," etc., the merest amateur will readily recognize the Homeric echo; but it is in the structural simplicity of the poem, in its broad rhythmic movement and its noble directness and purity of phrase, that the subtlest Greek feeling of the poet especially manifests itself. The natural copiousness of his diction, as displayed in his early romances and lyrics, abounding in metaphors and similes, is here wisely restrained; the poetic spirit is made to depend upon something deeper than mere external ornaments of style; it is a pervading afflatus which breathes through the whole text, enveloping all in its faint fragrance.

Renaissance in the best sense.

Homeric epithets.

Purity of diction.

The thought is as genuinely simple as the style, rising

nowhere above the mental horizon of the rural community within which the action is placed. In spite of its Hellenic garb it is, moreover, thoroughly Germanic, and affords, on the whole, the noblest realization of the author's artistic theory as expressed in the allegorical scene in "Faust," where the vanishing Helen leaves her garment in the hands of the Germanic hero.[1]

Simplicity of thought and style.

The opening scene represents the landlord of the Golden Lion, a sturdy citizen, no doubt, inclined to corpulency, in confidential conversation with his excellent wife, whom he praises for her forethought in having sent Hermann, their son, with clothes and provisions to the fleeing emigrants. Presently they are joined by the pastor and the apothecary, the former an easy-going, good-humored, and intelligent man, the latter a loquacious and somewhat whimsical bachelor, who believes in the old times and is apt to take a cynical view of the present; both are genuine village characters and are depicted with a vivid realism which gives them at once a hold upon our interest and affections.

Outline of the plot.

The pastor and the apothecary.

Hermann now returns from his charitable expedition, and gives an account of his adventures. He is a tall, well-grown youth, modest, serious, and respectful in his manners, and somewhat diffident in the presence of women. On this occasion, however, he is unusually cheerful, a fact which immediately attracts the pastor's attention. He does not know whether he has acted wisely, he says, but he has followed the dictates of his heart. He encountered a maiden driving a team of oxen, and to her he offered all the gifts of food and linen which his mother had given him to distribute; for in the wagon which she drove there was a woman with a new-born child, who seemed greatly in need of his charity. The apothecary congratulates himself upon his good fortune in being unincumbered with wife and child

Hermann returns from his errand.

Relates his adventure with Dorothea.

[1] See p. 266.

in such turbulent times; and Hermann rebukes him for his selfishness. The conversation turns upon matrimony, in its various aspects, and the father recommends the daughter of a wealthy neighbor to his son, and warns him very emphatically that he will accept none but a rich and well-born maiden as his daughter-in-law. Hermann, wounded by his father's harshness, leaves the room and saunters out into the orchard, where he flings himself down upon a bench under an old pear-tree. Here he is found by his mother, who affectionately inquires for the cause of his melancholy. He at first gives evasive answers, but at last confesses, what the mother has already conjectured, that he loves the emigrant girl, and is resolved to make her his wife. They return together to the house, where the mother announces Hermann's determination to marry the exiled maiden. The father, after some parleying, at last gives his consent, and the pastor and the apothecary are sent as emissaries to find out what reputation the maiden bears among her own people. Hermann accompanies them, and promises to accept their decision in the matter as final. He stops with his carriage at a well at the outskirts of the village, and the others hasten to fulfill their errand. They meet a judge among the emigrants, a man of venerable aspect, with whom the pastor converses for a while cautiously, gaining incidentally much valuable information concerning Dorothea, while the apothecary goes in quest of the girl herself. Her appearance charms the pastor, who is already more than satisfied with what he has seen and heard. But the apothecary, who is wont to assume a guarded attitude toward the other sex, being rather skeptical of its virtues, counsels extreme caution, and insists upon further inquiry. They return to the judge, who relates some of Dorothea's heroic deeds, and confirms them in their good opinion of her. Hermann is now at liberty to make his proposal, which

Hermann under the pear-tree.

His mother's consolation.

Hermann determines to marry Dorothea.

The pastor and the apothecary go in quest of Dorothea.

however, he hesitates to do, fearing that she may already be engaged. He meets her at the well, where she has come to draw water, and, instead of declaring his love for her, engages her as a servant for his father. She accepts and goes to bid her people farewell. In the clear moonlight they wander homeward together through the fields and meadows. As they descend the steps of a vineyard, Dorothea turns her ankle and is obliged to rest on Hermann's shoulder. They enter the parlor of the Golden Lion, where the father receives them with jocular speeches, compliments Hermann on his good taste, and thereby wounds Dorothea's feelings. The young man calls the pastor aside, and begs him to clear up the difficulty; he confesses that Dorothea believes herself to be engaged as a servant, not as his bride. The pastor readily consents, but, to Hermann's astonishment, takes the father's side, and thereby increases the misunderstanding. He wishes to test the strength of Dorothea's feelings. The poor girl, stung to the quick by his reproaches, begs them to let her return to her own people; her heart had gone forward with much tenderness toward Hermann, she says, and she had hoped that some time perhaps she might be deemed worthy to become his bride. But the father's jokes and the pastor's implied reproof have convinced her that the distance between the poor homeless maiden and the rich youth is too great. Therefore she abandons her hope, and desires to continue her wanderings. Hermann, greatly puzzled at the pastor's behavior, takes him severely to task; the latter avows his purpose, and points to the happy result of his innocent stratagem. The mother acquaints Dorothea with her real position in the household. She begs the father's pardon for her hasty words, both parents embrace her, and she is betrothed to Hermann.

Hermann and Dorothea return homeward together.

Dorothea's embarrassment.

Hermann's indignation at the pastor.

Betrothal.

What especially dignifies this simple story and gives it an epic grandeur and movement is its connection with the

great event of the eighteenth century, the French Revolution. The storm still lingers far in the background; we hear its sullen mutterings, and see now and then a flash of lurid lightning. We see the breathless, flying groups which precede the progress of the devastation, and we feel the dread power that is hurrying them onward. The revolution, although nowhere actually introduced, except as a theme of conversation, is still a distinctly felt presence throughout the domestic drama.

The French Revolution the background of the story.

"Hermann and Dorothea" was the first of Goethe's work, since "Werther," which appealed to the public at large. It immediately gained a wide popularity and brought its author a very handsome copyright. A. W. Schlegel hailed it in the "Literaturzeitung" (December, 1797) as a genuine German epic, representing the most complete union of the Germanic spirit with the Greek classical form; and Wilhelm von Humboldt wrote a whole book about it, which, however, to Schiller's astonishment, did not please Goethe as much as he had anticipated. Nevertheless the poem convinced Goethe that he had once more a public, a fact which he had long been disposed to doubt.

Goethe regains the public of his youth.

Another work for which the French Revolution furnished the *motif* was the tragedy, "The Natural Daughter." It was projected (1799) as a trilogy, but, probably owing to the indifference with which the first part was received by the public, was never finished. In spite of all the labor and intellectual force which Goethe expended upon it, it proved a failure upon the stage, and has long since been dropped from the *répertoire* of the German theatres. Its failure, however, is easily accounted for. In his endeavor to grasp and represent with philosophical coherence the spirit of the revolution, Goethe has forgotten to give it a body; while striving to fix the types which were the results and in part also

"The Natural Daughter."

the moving forces of the great world drama, he has neglected to individualize them. He has even disdained to give them names, introducing them merely in their representative capacity as king, count, duke, governor, judge, monk, etc. Again, there is a certain monotonous elegance pervading the dialogue, which offers but small scope for characterization, and contrasts glaringly with the rough-hewn realism which had won his countrymen's hearts in "Götz" and "Egmont." These typical figures, like the characters of the French academic tragedy, never descend from their tragical cothurnus, and the typical mask is not transparent or flexible enough to render the play of the individual features underneath perceptible. As symbols they are admirably conceived and historically interesting; and if Goethe's idea that the inequality in the distribution of property was the fundamental cause of the revolution is correct, the drama deserves, as a profound symbolic exposition of a great historic event, more respect and attention than have hitherto been accorded to it.

Unindividualized types.

Admirable symbols and historically interesting.

The influence of the Greek tragedy is here more manifest than perhaps in any other modern work. Goethe, like Æschylus, conceived that to be the most tragic situation where the hero, without any guilt of his own, is the helpless victim of some higher destiny which inexorably hurries him on to destruction. Eugenie, the natural daughter, is not responsible for her illegitimate birth; yet her royal blood is her Fate. It makes her, after the king has promised to legitimize her, the object of a series of intrigues on the part of the legitimate son and his followers, it gives her aspirations beyond the position in which circumstances have placed her, and, if the trilogy had been completed, would, no doubt, in the end, have been her ruin.

The influence of the Greek tragedy.

XIV.

MAY 9, 1805, Schiller died, having continued to labor with unflagging energy to the very last. Goethe, who was himself just recovering from a serious illness, was deeply affected. "I thought I was about to lose myself," he wrote to Zelter, "and now I lose a friend, and in him one half of my existence. I ought really to begin a new mode of life; but for such a change there is no room at my time of life. I therefore fix my eyes only on the day which lies immediately before me, and do that which lies nearest, without thinking of remoter consequences."

Schiller's death.

Whenever he refers to Schiller in later years it is usually in the same tone of affectionate, regretful remembrance. "He stood beside me like my youth, making actual existence a dream to me, weaving the golden vapors of the dawn about the common realities of life. In the fire of his loving soul, even the plain, every-day objects of life became, to my astonishment, exalted." [1]

Affectionate remembrance of Schiller.

In the solitude of the next following years Goethe became more and more absorbed in his optical experiments and the writing of his book on optics, entitled "The Doctrine of Colors" ("Die Farbenlehre"). According to the testimony of the scientists of our own day, the book is, with all its excellent writing, an ingenious elaboration of a fundamental error. For all that, "The Doctrine of Colors" is to a non-scientific reader a very delightful book; Goethe even in his errors is larger

"The Doctrine of Colors."

[1] Quoted from Julian Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*, vol. ii. p. 420.

and nobler than the soulless specialists who persecuted and tried to ridicule him. Whatever he says, he is apt to kindle some slumbering germ of thought within you into conscious life; incidentally you get glimpses of the most wonderful vistas, leading down into the hidden depths of Nature.

Cotta's edition of Goethe's works.

The uniform edition of Goethe's works which was published in twelve volumes by Cotta during the years 1806, 1807, and 1808, unfortunately appeared in the midst of the Napoleonic campaigns, when the Germans were too agitated concerning their national existence to have any thought for books. Even the completion of the first part of "Faust" failed to call forth any special enthusiasm.

Goethe's adventures after the battle of Jena, when the French occupied Weimar, and his sudden marriage to Christiane Vulpius, have been mentioned elsewhere. In September, 1808, he was called by the duke to Erfurt, where Napoleon and Alexander of Russia were trying to settle the future fate of Europe. At the audience to which Napoleon summoned him, each made a most favorable impression upon the other. Goethe counted himself henceforth among the profoundest admirers of the conqueror, and by his freely expressed opinions concerning him frequently incurred the hatred and persecution of the more extreme patriotic party among his countrymen. The emperor's opinion of "Werther," which he read during the Egyptian campaign, and his remark to Berthier and Daru on dismissing Goethe ("*Voilà un homme*") are too well known to need repetition.

Meeting with Napoleon at Erfurt.

Goethe's relation to Bettina Brentano, who visited Weimar in 1807 and 1811, and was both times received with much friendliness in the poet's house, has been made the subject of much more discussion than it deserved. Lewes has shown conclusively that the tenderness was all on her side, and has moreover dispelled the

Bettina Brentano.

sentimental interest which she had succeeded in gathering about herself by the publication of that marvelous fiction entitled "Goethe's Correspondence with a Child." Riemer tells in his "Mittheilungen" of how Goethe, on a certain occasion when Bettina was disposed to lead the conversation to tender topics, handed her a telescope in order to turn her attention to something more remote, and invited her to admire the comet.

Minna Herzlieb.

The affair with Minna Herzlieb, an adopted daughter of the bookseller Fromman, in Jena, was a kind of poetic devotion, in which his heart was much more deeply involved. It was, however, not of sufficient significance to warrant any elaborate discussion of it in a mere biographical sketch like the present. The series of sonnets which he addressed to her are full of delicate feeling, and give evidence that his heart remained ever fresh and never quite closed itself to the influence of the tender passion. Any one who will take the trouble to read without any preconceived prejudice his writings, and especially his conversations with Eckermann, Soret, and Chancellor von Müller, will easily convince himself that the poet was by nature affectionate, impressible, and endowed with a keen æsthetic appreciation of physical beauty as well as beauty of soul. It is a singular fact that so many, more particularly ladies, after having read Lewes's biography, imagine Goethe to have been a cold investigator, who delighted in psychological vivisection, and took down the result with scientific accuracy in his note-book.

Reflections concerning the validity of marriage.

"Elective Affinities."

Goethe's love for Minna Herzlieb at a time when he was yet bound to another naturally stimulated him to many reflections concerning the nature and validity of marriage; and these reflections, concretely embodied in living characters, furnished the theme of the novel, "Elective Affinities" ("Wahlverwandschaften"). The fatalism of this book is so pronounced as almost to banish the idea of indi-

vidual responsibility. Man appears but as the helpless result of a complication of causes which are utterly beyond his control. His will is never free,[1] being but the joint product of his inherited temperament and certain physical conditions under which he lives. The limitations of the human will. It is evidently this which Goethe wishes to indicate by the parallelism which he repeatedly emphasizes between chemical phenomena and human love and hatred. One man repels or attracts another according to certain eternal laws, as two chemical substances repel or attract each other. There is an inexorable fatality pervading the whole book, which calmly frustrates every effort on the part of the individual to thwart or to counteract it. Goethe's fatalism. It is not necessary to pronounce upon the validity of this theory, but it is necessary to bear it in mind while reading the story; otherwise the strange concatenation of events will appear extremely enigmatical and the conclusion needlessly tragic.

The plot is briefly as follows: Edward, a rich nobleman, and Charlotte, his wife, have lived happily together for some months after their marriage, Outline of the plot. when a captain and a young girl, Ottilie, a protégée of Charlotte's, are invited to spend some time in their house. Edward falls passionately in love with Ottilie, Edward loves Ottilie, and desires a separation from his wife. who returns his love, and a similar relation gradually develops itself between Charlotte and the captain. Edward, conscious of his inability to conquer his passion, desires a separation from his wife; but the wife and the captain maintain that marriage is in-

[1] Compare Dr. Ernest Haeckel's *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte*, pp. 212, 213: "The will of an animal as well as that of man is never free. The wide-spread dogma of the freedom of the will is not at all scientifically tenable. Every physiologist who examines the will-activity of man and animals scientifically necessarily arrives at the conclusion that their will is really never free, but always determined by external and internal conditions. These influences are mostly ideas acquired by inheritance or adaptation, and are reducible to the one or the other of these physiological functions."

dissoluble; and the *dénouement*, as well as many private utterances of the author, prove that he shares their opinion. The tragic conflict, however, between passion and duty he also regards as absolute; the problem seems to him insoluble.

He joins the army.

Edward joins the army, hoping amid larger scenes and events to find forgetfulness for the sorrow which is gnawing at the root of his being. But he is disappointed. His wife has during his absence borne him a child, which she hopes will restore his love to her; but the child, while intrusted to Ottilie's care, is accidentally drowned, and Edward, who still clings to the latter, is thus still farther removed from his wife. Charlotte, who, from a supreme regard for duty, has hitherto fought bravely against her feelings for her husband's friend, and thus felt justified in demanding from Edward a similar sacrifice, now recognizes the futility of her efforts, and consents to a separation. But Ottilie, roused to violent self-reproach by the death of the child, resolves to flee from temptation, and returns to the *pension* where she has been educated. Here Edward seeks her, and persuades her to return with him. Yet she remains firm in her determination to renounce him. Her guilt appears to her in all its enormity, and, broken in spirit and in health, she attempts to kill herself by starvation. A meddlesome friend, Mittler, rebukes her harshly for the misfortunes she has brought upon the household, which before her arrival was so bright and happy, and during his harangue she dies. Edward lingers for a while, fades away slowly, and at last follows her into the grave.

Death of the child.

Ottilie's self-reproach.

Death of Ottilie and Edward.

The closing paragraph strikes one as being a trifle out of tune with the rest. It represents the fate of the unhappy lovers as a martyrdom: —

The closing paragraph.

"Thus rest the loving ones side by side. Peace is hovering over their resting-place; fair kindred angelic faces

gaze down upon them from the vault overhead. What a happy moment it will be, if one day they awake together."

The author, as has been said, offers no solution of the problem ;. he merely states it clearly and emphatically. It is, if I understand him aright, the misfortune of Edward and Ottilie that Nature constituted them so that they must of necessity love each other; but he attaches no blame to them. You might with equal propriety, to use his own simile, blame sulphuric acid for rushing into an intimate union with limestone, thus forming a new substance, gypsum. And Charlotte's observation concerning this phenomenon no one can rationally object to: "I cannot see any choice in this; I see a natural necessity, rather, and scarcely that. After all, it is perhaps merely a case of opportunity. Opportunity makes relations as it makes thieves; and as long as the talk is merely of natural substances, the choice to me appears to be altogether in the hands of the chemist who brings the creatures together. Once, however, let them be brought together, and then may God have mercy on them!"

The problem incapable of solution.

A natural necessity but no choice.

This conception of human beings as absolute natural phenomena reappears throughout the book in various disguises. Thus, for instance, Ottilie gets a headache whenever she approaches a place where a bed of coal lies hidden in the earth. A pendulum, which in Charlotte's hands remains perpendicular, begins to swing violently as soon as Ottilie touches it. This intimate connection of man with physical nature is also indicated by the conspicuous manner in which the park, the lake, and the whole landscape surrounding the estate are interwoven with the story.

Human beings regarded as natural phenomena.

How far the fatalistic creed which Goethe here advances is merely an artistic theory or a personal conviction is difficult to decide. It appears to have been the combined result of his scientific studies and his revived admiration for

the Greek tragedy. A tragic conflict must of necessity be irreconcilable; otherwise it is not tragic. The ancient idea of an inexorable Fate which orders the lives of men quite independent of their own actions has hardly any place in the thoughts of modern men, and could not therefore be utilized as a tragic *motif* in a modern romance; but if the spiritual qualities of men, their temperaments and hence their relations to each other, are really predetermined by their ancestry and the conditions under which they live, — if their actions are but the product of these factors, and their will thus in no wise free, — then the Greeks were not far wrong in their view of Fate as a blind, inexorable deity, from whose judgments there was no appeal.

"Fate" as applied to modern life.

With all its excellences, "Elective Affinities" is a very discouraging book. The plot and the characterization are carefully studied, and developed with an almost scientific minuteness, and we therefore miss the fresh charm of improvisation and the vivid realism which were so impressive in Goethe's earlier tales. Thus, for instance, Ottilie's diary abounds in wise sayings and aphorisms, which are destructive of all illusion, and would, in real life, fairly frighten one in a young girl of twenty. It is the accumulated wisdom of a hoary sage who has thought much concerning men and things, and likes to compress his observations into brief, sententious epigrams.

A discouraging book.

XV.

GOETHE had now stood for nearly half a century before the world, looming up easily above the herd of men, a mighty personality whose influence made itself potently felt far beyond the limits of his own fatherland. Wherever he lived, there was the capital of Germany. He had associated more or less intimately with most of the great men of the century and had impressed them with the serenity of his bearing, the vigor of his thought, and the universality of his culture. He might well be justified in believing that it would benefit humanity to know by what processes of education and experience he had reached his present eminence. The time had arrived for him to sum up the results of his existence, to reveal to the world the chain of interlinking events which had led to such grand achievements. It may be hazardous, perhaps, to assert that it was any such consideration for humanity at large which impelled him in his sixty-first year to begin the writing of his autobiography; if we are to accept his own declaration as final, he wrote only for himself and for friends whose mode of thought was closely akin to his own. He wrote, as he said to Riemer, whatever urged itself upon him, whatever he regarded as proper at every stage of his own culture. In the case of the autobiography, the first stimulus appears to have been derived from his labors in editing the posthumous papers of his friend, the artist, Philip Hackert. The first volume of the work, dealing with his childhood and early life in Frankfort, was published in 1811, under the title, "Fact and Fiction from my Life" ("Aus meinem Leben: Wahrheit und Dichtung").

Goethe's influence widely felt.

The time to sum up the results of his life.

The first impulse to his autobiography.

The second volume followed in 1812, the third in 1814, but the fourth and concluding one did not appear until 1831. For very obvious reasons he refrained from giving a detailed account of his life after his removal to Weimar. The "Italian Journey," the account of the Campaign in France, his "Letters from Switzerland," his correspondence with Schiller and Frau von Stein, and a number of other biographical documents, published since his death, throw abundant light upon every phase of his existence, from the cradle to the grave, and form in their *tout ensemble* a more complete biography than has ever been left us by any other man of genius.

"Aus meinem Leben: Wahrheit und Dichtung."

The beautiful fact which impresses us on every page of Goethe's autobiography is the unity of his life, its organic continuity and coherence; no aimless groping here, no sudden and spasmodic efforts followed by ignominious collapses, but a steady, gradual evolution toward ever nobler forms of thought and expression. Every stage of his intellectual growth is firmly based upon every preceding one, is, or appears to be, its necessary result and logical completion. With what frank and dignified modesty he relates the story of his youthful adventures, his friendships and his literary triumphs! Every commonplace event, when lifted into the golden atmosphere of his imagination, becomes a poem, and his whole life thus becomes an uninterrupted commentary on his works. With sublime self-reliance he calmly follows the inborn law of his being, holding personal relations binding only so long as they are founded on real sympathy of soul. It is hardly strange that when reviewing, at the age of sixty, the events of his early youth, his memory should sometimes have failed him, and that thus occasional inaccuracies as to dates and motives should have insinuated themselves into the story of his life. The conscious effort, too, to reduce

The organic continuity and coherence of his life.

His memory at times at fault.

the manifold events of his past into an artistically rounded whole, may, in some instances, have induced him to heighten the color of single scenes, and to omit details which might tend to disturb the poetic effect. Grimm has called attention to several such instances, especially in the chapter on Sesenheim, and in the one dealing with Wetzlar and Charlotte Buff. This tendency, however, is already indicated on the title-page, in the word "Dichtung," and, moreover, affects but slightly the biographical value of the work, while it immeasurably increases its artistic effect.

Slight inaccuracies.

While the boom of Napoleon's cannon was resounding throughout Europe, Goethe, as he himself expresses it, retired into his snail's house, busying himself in the privacy of his own thought with his literary projects, and concerning himself but little about the fate of the contending empires. In the year 1813 a translation of the Persian poet Hafis, by Hammer-Purgstall, fell into his hands and led him to more exhaustive studies of the poetry of the Orient. The fruit of these studies was a series of half speculative, half lyrical poems in the Oriental spirit, collected in the year 1819 under the title "The West-Eastern Divan" ("West-Oestlicher Divan").[1] We miss here the bird-like improvisation of Goethe's earlier lyrics; an autumnal atmosphere pervades the book. The didactic purpose becomes ever more pronounced. A certain sententious morality, too ponderous, at times, for the light lyrical measures, betrays the teacher, to whom the wisdom of his rhymes is much more precious than their melody. It was not in Goethe's nature to adapt his features readily to a foreign mask; he is usually himself the hero of whatever he writes. He may change his costume, but the countenance and the voice, except for the natural change

Oriental studies.

"West-Eastern Divan."

The Oriental disguise not effectual.

[1] An English translation of this collection, by Rev. John Weiss, has recently appeared. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1877.

with the advance of age, will ever remain the same. In the "Divan" the Oriental sentiments are little more than a carnival disguise, under which the old poet moves a little stiffly, perhaps, though usually both with dignity and grace.

Does not always preserve the Oriental metres.

The translation from which Goethe had merely adapted some of these songs unfortunately did not preserve the Persian metres, and he had thus no means of knowing how widely his own renderings deviated from the originals. Nevertheless he seems in single instances instinctively to have approached the Oriental forms, a chief characteristic of which, according to Goedeke, is to carry one rhyme through the whole verse, and frequently through several successive verses, or even through the whole poem. The repetition of the same word or phrase at the end of each line, or of alternate lines, is also, according to the same authority, a frequent device.[1] Thus in one of the finest songs in the "Divan," "In tausend Formen magst Du dich verstecken," a very happy effect is obtained by the recurrence in alternate lines of the words, "*erkenn' ich dich.*"

The book "Suleika" less didactic, and more spontaneously lyrical.

In the book entitled "Suleika," which is more purely and spontaneously lyrical than the other portions of the "Divan," the didacticism is more veiled and subdued; the ancient sage is fired with youthful passion, and breaks out in superb strains of fresh, unpremeditated melody. Some of the most exquisite lyrics in this book, however ("Ach um deine feuchten Schwingen," "Sag du hast wohl viel gedichtet," "Wie mit innigstem Behagen," etc.), are said to have been writ-

[1] Admirable specimens of this kind of verse, partly adapted or imitated from Persian models, partly independent creations in the Oriental spirit, are to be found in the famous book, *Die Lieder von Mirza-Schaffy, mit einem Prolog von Friedrich Bodenstedt.* Among the poems in this collection which are especially remarkable for their close adherence to the Oriental form, the following are worthy of mention: "Seh' ich deine zarten Füsschen an," "O selig wer von Urbeginn," and "Sollen gut meine Lieder der Liebe gesungen werden."

ten by Madame Marianne Willmer, the young wife of an old Frankfort merchant, and a passionate adorer of the poet. The report would deserve but little credence if so great an authority as Hermann Grimm had not undertaken to prove almost beyond a doubt that the above-named poems were actually addressed to Goethe by Madame Willmer, and probably with her consent included in the "Divan." Single lines he may have changed and modified, so as to harmonize them with the prevailing tone of the book; and although no one without a knowledge of their authorship would have pronounced them unworthy of Goethe or especially un-Oriental in thought, it is nevertheless, after the revelation made by Grimm, easy to perceive that they are quite destitute of any positively Oriental element, and might with equal propriety have been sung by a German maiden who had a poet for a lover.

Authorship of some of the poems attributed to Madame Willmer.

XVI.

POLITICALLY, as we have seen, Goethe held aloof from his time; he offered no encouragement to his countrymen in their heroic efforts to throw off the Napoleonic yoke. "Only shake your fetters," he said; "the man is too great for you. You will not break them."

Goethe's political indifference.

Such an indifference must have been highly exasperating to a nation which was fighting for its very existence, and no one will blame the Germans for resenting it. Had Goethe been a less conspicuous man, had his opinions accordingly had less weight, he would have been more readily forgiven. That Germany's greatest son should have looked on so coolly while the French conqueror ravaged the land, and should even have forbidden his own son to take part in the war of liberation, are facts which still rankle in many a German bosom. On the other hand, to those to whom Goethe is precious as a great man rather than as a great German, his attitude toward the liberation movement need occasion neither surprise nor regret. Goethe saw with a keenness and clearness which were fatal to all patriotic delusions; instead of conquering liberty, the Germans merely exchanged one foreign tyrant for many native ones. They fell into the arms of a miserable, soulless reaction. The princes had by liberal promises of freedom and constitutional government stimulated their patriotic enthusiasm; but no sooner was Napoleon vanquished than all of them broke their promises, and forged the old fetters only the more tightly.

The Germans resent it.

His fatal clear-sightedness.

The perjury of the German princes.

I say all, but there was one honorable exception. Karl August, the grand duke of Saxe-Weimar, honestly fulfilled his engagements, established a parliament, and held himself henceforth responsible to his people for his administration. It is well known that Goethe had no sympathy with these reforms, and even carried his antagonism against the newly established chamber so far as to refuse to render an account of the funds intrusted to him during his term of office. And the chamber, knowing well Goethe's proud integrity as well as his contempt for the duke's constitutional innovations, good-humoredly renounced its right of investigation.

Karl August keeps his promises.

Goethe's hostility to the constitutional reforms.

To comprehend fully Goethe's political sentiments, it is necessary to bear in mind that he was essentially a product of the eighteenth century.[1] He had, properly speaking, no fatherland, and patriotism was, outside of the military bureaucracy of Prussia, an unknown emotion in the Germany of his youth. For the petty local pride of a free city like Frankfort, or a small duchy like Saxe-Weimar, could hardly be dignified by that name. The vague æsthetic yearnings, the enthusiasm for culture and the indifference toward society at large, which Goethe has so admirably portrayed in "Wilhelm Meister," formed the atmosphere which he himself breathed in his early years, and although he was keen-sighted enough to be able to interpret the signs of the times as tending toward a leveling of the ancient feudal barriers, and a closer reciprocity between the various classes of society, he still found it hard to subordinate himself practically to the new state of things, the necessity of which he theoretically was ready to recognize. A government by majorities always appeared to him an abomination; for he valued men only in proportion to their

A son of the eighteenth century.

Democrat in theory, aristocrat in practice.

[1] See Hettner's *Goethe und Schiller*, Zweiter Band, Zehntes Capitel; *Goethe's Politische Stellung*, pp. 512–524.

talents and culture, and the great unenlightened herd of humanity he was apt to view as an *ignobile vulgus*. The eighteenth century was cosmopolitan in its dreams and aspirations: Lessing had in his dialogue, "Ernst und Falk," pleaded for the establishment of an international tribunal composed of large-minded, catholic men of all nations, which should be the final authority in all international difficulties. The School of Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*), which subsisted only on the intellectual capital which Lessing had bequeathed to it, was animated by a similar spirit, and Goethe, although he was bitterly opposed both to the leaders of the school and to its utilitarian tendencies, nevertheless could not wholly escape its influence.

Lessing's international tribunal.

In one of his conversations with Soret[1] (1830) Goethe makes some striking allusions to the political condition of Germany during his later years, and more especially indicates his own attitude toward the political movements of his day. They had been discussing the merits of Béranger's songs, when Goethe continued as follows: "A political poem, under the most fortunate circumstances, is to be looked upon only as the voice of a single nation, and in most cases as the voice of a certain party. But if it succeeds it is seized with enthusiasm by this nation or this party. Moreover, a political poem should always be looked upon as a mere result of a certain temporary phase of things, which, in passing away, deducts from the poem whatever value it may have derived from the subject. As for Béranger, his was no hard task. Paris is France. All the important interests of that great country are concentrated in the capital, and here have their proper life and their proper echo. . . . . With us in Germany such a state of things is not possible. We have no city, we have no country, of

Merits and defects of political poems.

Béranger's songs.

[1] *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret*, pp. 454–457. Bohn Standard Library. London, 1874.

which we could decidedly say, Here is Germany! If we inquire in Vienna, the answer is, This is Austria! and if in Berlin, the answer is, This is Prussia!"

And in reply to Soret's remark that he (Goethe) had been reproached for not taking up arms or lending any assistance to the great national movement which resulted in the expulsion of the French, Goethe continues: —

"How could I take up arms without hatred, and how could I hate without youth? If such an emergency had befallen me when I was twenty years old, I should certainly not have been the last; but it found me as one who had already passed the first sixties.

Goethe's justification for not participating in the war of liberation.

"To write military songs and sit in my room! That, forsooth, was my duty! To have written them in the bivouac, when the horses of the enemy's outposts are heard neighing at night, would have been well enough; however, that was not my life and not my business, but that of Theodore Körner. His war-songs suit him perfectly. But to me, who am not a warlike nature and who have no warlike sense, war-songs would have been a mask which would have fitted my face very badly.

"I have never affected anything in poetry. I have never uttered anything which I have not experienced and which has not urged me to production. I have composed love-songs when I have loved. How could I write songs of hatred without hating? And between ourselves, I did not hate the French, although I thanked God when we were rid of them. How could I, to whom culture and barbarism are alone of importance, hate a nation which is among the most cultivated of the earth, and to which I owe so great a part of my own culture?

Goethe's poetic sincerity.

"Altogether, national hatred is a peculiar thing. You will always find it strongest and most violent on the lowest stage of culture. But there is a stage where it vanishes altogether, and where one stands to a cer-

National hatred.

tain extent *above* the nations, and feels the weal and woe of a neighboring people, as if it had happened to be one's own. This degree of culture was conformable to my nature, and I had become strengthened in it, long before I had reached my sixtieth year."

Goethe strives to keep himself *en rapport* with the new generation.

Although politically an alien among his own people, Goethe strove in everything else to keep himself *en rapport* with the new generation which was growing up about him. Old age did not petrify him, nor, as is so frequently the case, develop his personal peculiarities into eccentric oddities. His naturally fine senses remained ever fresh and wakeful, and his heart continued to the last to beat warmly for what was good and true. Truth was to him impersonal; it belonged to no party or nation, and no matter where it came from, he was ready to receive it. The age was changing, as he well knew it must, and if he were to preserve his usefulness he must adapt himself to it.

The hospitality of his mind.

Hence the marvelous hospitality of his mind, which enabled him to give a hearing even to hostile views which seemed discordant with the whole tenor of his thought. He knew withal how to preserve his spiritual independence; he judged dispassionately and without prejudice of the value of every new intellectual movement, bided his time, and at length spoke his clear and decisive dictum. That ideal of a pure, harmoniously developed humanity (*Menschlichkeit* not *Menschheit*) which he, like Schiller, regarded as the noblest result of the Greek civilization, always remained his standard of judgment, from which he never swerved. And yet he was able to enter, at first somewhat guardedly, but later with a fuller appreciation, into the Gothic enthusiasm of Sulpiz Boisserée, and to assist him in his efforts to restore the cathedral of Cologne. Stimulated by his intercourse and correspondence with Boisserée, he even in the years 1814 and 1815 made jour-

The noblest result of the Greek civilization.

neys to the Rhine for the purpose of reviving his impressions of Gothic art, which he had so long neglected, and which, during and immediately after his Italian journey, he had looked upon as crude monuments of Northern barbarism.

Goethe resumes the Gothic studies of his youth.

Goethe was by this time well aware that Greek art was the flower of a civilization which was irrevocably past, and that, while we might learn from the Greeks a healthy appreciation of physical existence and reverence for the beauty of the human form, any attempt to revive their art in its totality must necessarily prove futile. On the other hand the so-called romantic art had its *raison d'être* in the historic traditions of the Germanic race, and must therefore appeal much more directly to the inherited sentiments of a Germanic people. The Renaissance was, therefore, a much healthier and more indigenous movement in Italy and France than it could ever be in Germany. Accordingly his treatises on Germanic art published in the periodical "Kunst und Alterthum" ("Art and Antiquity"), were chiefly directed against the gloomy ultramontane tendencies of the artists of the Nazarene School, and while they accorded their full due of praise to masters like Overbeck and Cornelius, nevertheless censured their morbid asceticism, which was no less at variance with the genius of the Teutonic nations than it was with that of the Greeks. His free and healthy mind could not bring itself to accept the unnatural Nazarene doctrine that the spirit was eternally at war with the body, and that spiritual beauty found its fittest expression in lank limbs, in pale and distorted features, and other deviations from the normal type of physical health and beauty. It was an incomparable conclusion, he said, speaking of Wackenroder's "Effusions of an Art-Loving Friar," that because some monks had been artists, all artists should be monks.

Why the Greek art cannot be revived.

Opposition to the Nazarene School.

Ultramontanism in art.

A similar attitude of toleration and qualified approval he

assumed toward the authors of the Romantic School. Whatever there was genuine in the school he praised, but its mediæval enthusiasm, its religious sentimentalism, and its general tendency toward fantastic extravagance, he fearlessly censured. A. W. Schlegel's drama, "Ion," and his brother's "Alarcos," were brought upon the stage in Weimar, and even Zacharias Werner's horrible martyr-plays, whose whole spirit he must have cordially detested, were received as interesting novelties. How little patience he really at heart had with the ultramontane affectations of the Romantic leaders (Fr. Schlegel, Novalis, Z. Werner, Clemens Brentano, etc.) is proved by a delightful little anecdote related by Professor Heinrich Steffens in his autobiography: —

Attitude toward the Romantic School.

"Goethe[1] came over to Jena, and I saw him for the first time after seven years of separation. His presence had a powerful effect upon me. . . . . Goethe invited my wife, Fromann's family, and myself, over from Jena to dine with him. We found at the table, besides Goethe's wife, only Meyer, Riemer, and the poet Werner. Goethe was very lively; the conversation turned on a number of subjects, and the unconstrained and yet suggestive remarks of our host pleased and exhilarated us all. He could make himself agreeable even to ladies.

An account of a visit to Goethe by H. Steffens.

"At length he turned to Werner, who had taken little part in the conversation thus far. 'Now, Werner,' said he, in a quiet, but at the same time authoritative way, 'have you nothing with which you can entertain us? No poems which you can read to us?' Werner plunged his hand into his pocket, and hastily drew out a mass of crumpled, dirty papers, so that I was amazed, and by no means approved of Goethe's request, which promised to extinguish all free

[1] The present anecdote is found in the abridged American edition of Steffens's *Was ich Erlebte*, pp. 194–196. The American translation by W. L. Gage is entitled *German University Life*. Philadelphia, 1874.

and interesting conversation. Werner began to repeat a number of sonnets in a shocking manner. At last I was compelled to give some attention to one of them. The subject was the beautiful appearance of the full moon, as it swam in the clear Italian sky. He compared it to a holy wafer. This stiff simile enraged me, and had on Goethe an unpleasant effect; he turned to me. 'Now, Steffens,' he said, outwardly calm, while he tried to suppress his exasperation, 'what say you to that?' 'Mr. Werner,' I answered, 'had the kindness to read a sonnet to me a few days ago, in which he expressed his regret that he had come to Italy too late! I now believe that he was right. I am too much of a naturalist to wish for an exchange between the moon and a hallowed wafer; the emblem of our faith loses as much by the comparison as the moon.' On this Goethe gave up to his feelings, and expressed himself with a warmth which I had never seen in him before. 'I hate,' said he, 'this bald religious sentimentality; do not believe that I will show it any quarter. Neither on the stage nor here will I listen to it, in whatever guise it may appear.' After he had talked in this strain for some time, and louder and louder, he became quiet. 'You have destroyed the pleasure of my dinner,' he said, seriously; 'you know that such pitiful, poetical pretenses are an abomination to me; you have made me forget my duty to the ladies.' He now regained complete command of himself, turned with language of apology to his wife and mine, began to talk on indifferent subjects, but soon rose and retired. We then saw he felt himself deeply wounded, and that he was going to compose his mind in solitude. Werner was like one annihilated."

Zacharias Werner's sonnet.

The moon compared to a holy wafer.

"I hate religious sentimentality."

As the years progressed, the effects of Goethe's activity began to make themselves felt in foreign lands, and he watched with keen interest and gratification his growing influence in every domain of

Goethe's fame in foreign lands.

human knowledge. While in Germany the Romantic School, although nominally recognizing his greatness, removed itself ever farther from the principles of art for which he had fought, a certain school of French authors which, curiously enough, also assumed the title of Romantic, strove through its organ, the "Globe," to establish his authority beyond the Rhine. Although undoubtedly with the ulterior object of gaining a mighty ally against their enemies at home, the Academicians, these men, among whom Quinet, Ampère, and Prosper Mérimée were the most prominent, paid their enthusiastic homage to the German poet, and, in spite of their defective comprehension of the spirit of his teachings, contributed not a little toward bringing his writings to the notice of the French public. Goethe, as his own utterances show, was not in the least deceived as to their real motives in apotheosizing him, but he sympathized at heart with their rebellion against the Academy, and derived much pleasure from seeing his own name thus figuring as the watchword in a great literary warfare.

The French Romanticists.

A much more thorough and intelligent appreciation of Goethe's greatness as a man and a poet was manifested by Thomas Carlyle, who translated "Wilhelm Meister," and in a series of excellent essays in the leading English reviews elucidated the ethical as well as the artistic phases of his manifold activity. With Italy Goethe also maintained a desultory connection through the poet Manzoni, whose tragedy, "Count Carmagnola," he reviewed, as Goedeke thinks, with a view to instruct the author rather than to edify the public.

Thomas Carlyle.

Manzoni.

The ready recognition which Goethe found abroad, and his extensive connection with foreign authors, gradually developed in him the idea of a world-literature. He had himself gathered the chief intellectual currents of his age, and made them pulsate through his own being; national differences and conflicting interests, which

The world-literature.

drew the peoples apart, seemed to him of small significance compared to the great and abiding interests which all mankind has in common. Truth knows no nationality; and a great thought is great in whatever language it is clothed. In the upper regions of the intellect men meet merely as men — as poets, thinkers, scientists — and all accidental distinctions of party, rank, and nationality vanish. A people is largely influenced, its character slowly modified, by its literature; if then every people could be induced to share in the intellectual life of its neighbors, and be made acquainted with the noblest products of their literature, the so-called national differences would necessarily in the course of centuries grow less. Every civilized nation would exercise a correcting, modifying influence upon all its brother nations; every mighty thought, as soon as it was uttered, would reverberate through the intellectual atmosphere of the whole civilized world. The ancient Greeks, who were the only people whose culture had been founded upon this broad, universally human basis, would always remain absolute authorities in matters of art; they were not to be imitated, however, but the spirit of their work, if properly comprehended, would stimulate the modern artist to noble and independent creation.

Truth has no nationality.

The works of the Greeks the universal standard.

Whatever objections may be urged against these ideas, it is not to be denied that they have that largeness and scope which characterize even the most accidental utterances of Goethe. Let any one who would gain a vivid idea of his personality, as he appeared in his old age, read his conversations with Eckermann and Chancellor von Müller, and he will scarcely fail to be profoundly impressed by the wisdom, the occasional wit, and above all by the vastness of horizon which everywhere surrounds the thought of this mighty man.

Goethe's conversations with Eckermann and Chancellor von Müller.

During the last years of Goethe's life death reaped an abundant harvest among those who were dearest to him.

June 14, 1828, died his oldest friend, the Grand Duke Karl August, and the grand duchess soon followed. Frau von Stein had died a few years earlier (1826). But the hardest blow of all was the loss of his only son, August von Goethe, who died suddenly in Rome, October 27, 1830, and was buried beside the pyramid of Cestius.

Death of the grand duke, Frau von Stein, and Goethe's son August.

There is little more to be recorded. The noble life which had been the vital centre of the century was approaching its end. It had been a strictly secular life, and yet a sacred life; but in its secularity rests its chief power. "If a man does his duty faithfully and according to the best of his knowledge in this world, the other world will take care of itself." Thus his opinions on ethical subjects might be roughly summarized. He therefore spent no time in speculation on things which are, according to their nature, unknowable in this life, but directed his vast powers of observation with only the greater emphasis toward every phenomenon in the physical and the moral universe from which by a subtle synthesis he could deduce the grand and living laws of which these phenomena were but the external manifestations. He questioned all the creation and forced the Sphinx to deliver itself of its cherished riddle. His advocacy of Neptunism in geology, the discovery of the intermaxillary bone, which enabled him to anticipate the doctrine of evolution, and his theory of the typical plant, sufficiently prove that he did not question Nature in vain. He was not satisfied with the shallow traditional solutions of every-day problems, but sought to penetrate to the hidden soul which breathed and labored under commonplace facts. He saw the colossal law which operated in the growth of the tiniest blade of grass.

The secularity of Goethe's life.

His achievements in science.

Science until his time had been but a vast catalogue of detached facts, carefully labeled with sonorous Greek and Latin names; he strove to reduce all

Systematized science.

this miscellaneous knowledge to a system by the reassertion of the pregnant truth of the essential unity of Nature. To-day he is quoted as an authority by geologists, physiologists,[1] and botanists, while the scientific specialists who denied him a hearing in his own day are now mostly forgotten.

A man of letters.

Of his enduring influence as a man of letters I need not speak. His own nation is still classifying, labeling, and arranging the abundant treasures which he left them. His far-resonant thought is still vibrating through the intellectual atmosphere of the whole civilized world.

Goethe dies March 22, 1832.

Goethe died March 22, 1832, a few months after having finished the second part of his "Faust." His last words were, "Light, more light."

Quotation from Eckermann.

"The morning after Goethe's death," says Eckermann, "a deep desire seized me to view once more his earthly remains. His faithful servant, Frederic, opened for me the chamber where he was lying. Stretched upon his back, he reposed as if asleep; profound peace and firmness reigned in the features of his sublime, noble countenance. The mighty brow seemed yet to harbor thoughts. . . . . The body lay naked, only wrapped in a white winding-sheet. . . . . The servant drew aside the sheet and I marveled at the divine magnificence of those limbs. The breast was extraordinarily powerful, broad, and arched; the arms and thighs were full and softly muscular; the feet shapely and of the purest form; and nowhere on the whole body was there any trace of fat or of leanness or decay. A perfect man lay in great beauty before me; and the rapture occasioned by this sight made me forget for a moment that the immortal spirit

The peace of death.

The magnificence of Goethe's form.

No trace of leanness or decay.

[1] Haeckel's famous volume, *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte*, opens with Goethe's essay on Nature, and throughout the work his opinions are quoted in support of the author's exposition of the theory of evolution.

had left such an abode. I placed my hand on his heart; there was a deep stillness, and I turned away to give free vent to my suppressed tears."

Summing up all the varied phases of Goethe's existence, his errors as well as his virtues, it is safe to assert that he was the most complete type of man in modern history.

The most complete type of man

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY.

1766–1769.

The Accomplices; early lyrics.

1772.

Translation of Goldsmith's Deserted Village; the Wanderer (poem); Concerning German Architecture (essay); reviews in Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen; Götz von Berlichingen.

1773–1774.

Werther; Clavigo; Gods, Heroes, and Wieland (satire); plan for the dramatic poem Mahomet; The Wandering Jew (a fragment); Prometheus; Stella; scenes of Faust; lyrics.

1775.

Scenes of Faust; Erwin and Elmira, and Claudine von Villa Bella (operas); Lillie's Park (poem); begins Egmont.

1776.

Minor poems: Wanderer's Night-Song.

1777.

Begins Wilhelm Meister; Lyrics.

1778.

The first book of Wilhelm Meister finished; a few more scenes of Egmont.

1779.

Iphigenia in its original prose form; Egmont continued.

1780.

Egmont continued; begins Tasso; Letters from Switzerland.

1781.

Completes Tasso in prose; lyrics.

1782.

Second and third books of Wilhelm Meister.

1783.

Fourth book of Wilhelm Meister; Minor poems.

1784.

Fifth book of Wilhelm Meister.

1785.

Sixth book of Wilhelm Meister finished; plot for six more books; criticism of Hamlet.

1786.

Rewrites Iphigenia in verse. (Journey to Italy.)

1787.

Begins rewriting Tasso in verse; fragment of a tragedy to be called Nausikaa; desultory labor on Wilhelm Meister; Egmont completed.

1788.

The operas Erwin and Elmira, and Claudine von Villa Bella, rewritten; Roman Elegies; plan for a further elaboration of Faust, and some scenes written, especially the scene in the Witch's Kitchen; Tasso continued.

1789.

Tasso completed.

1790.

Revision of his collected works completed; revises the Roman Elegies; writes the Metamorphoses of Plants; first ideas for the Doctrine of Colors; Venetian Epigrams.

1791.

Optical studies; lyrics.

1792.

Contributions to optics; the Doctrine of Colors continued.

1793.

Reynard the Fox; begins writing The Conversations of German Emigrants in Schiller's Die Horen.

1794.

The three first books of Wilhelm Meister in their revised form completed; Conversations of German Emigrants continued.

1795.

Confessions of a Fair Spirit in Wilhelm Meister; essay, Literary Sansculottism; edits the Venetian Epigrams; sketches the Introduction to the Study of Comparative Anatomy; fourth, fifth, and sixth books of Wilhelm Meister, in their final revised form.

1796.

The Xenien; translation of Benvenuto Cellini's Autobiography begun; idyl, Alexis and Dora; essay, The Introduction to the Study of Comparative Anatomy; completes Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship; the first cantos of Hermann and Dorothea; some scenes of Faust.

1797.

Hermann and Dorothea completed; Cellini's Autobiography continued; ballads and lyrics; The Dedication and Prologue to Faust; plot for an epic on Wilhelm Tell.

1798.

Cellini continued; Faust continued; Plot of Achilleïs; Introduction to the Doctrine of Colors.

1799.

Achilleïs, first canto; Faust and the Doctrine of Colors continued; translates Voltaire's Mahomet.

1800.

Continuation of Doctrine of Colors; Helena begun.

1801.

Further material for the Doctrine of Colors collected; first act of tragedy, The Natural Daughter.

1802.

Second act of The Natural Daughter; Cellini's Autobiography and Doctrine of Colors continued.

1803.

Translation of Cellini's Autobiography completed; first part of the projected trilogy, The Natural Daughter, completed; songs and lyrics.

1804.

Götz von Berlichingen revised for the Weimar Theatre; the Doctrine of Colors continued; begins Biography of Winckelmann.

1805.

Biography of Winckelmann completed; Epilogue to Schiller's The Bell; Doctrine of Colors sent to press.

1806.

Scientific essays; the first part of Faust completed; his works published by Cotta in twelve volumes; revision and editing of the Doctrine of Colors.

1807.

Plot of Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre; fairy tale, The New Melusine; arranges the materials for a Life of Philip Hackert; first act of Pandora; printing and revision of Doctrine of Colors continued.

1808.

Sonnets and ballads; plot for the romance Elective Affinities.

1809.

Revision of the Doctrine of Colors continued; Elective Affinities; preparatory labors for his Autobiography, Fact and Fiction (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*).

1810.

Doctrine of Colors completed; Life of Philip Hackert begun; material for Autobiography arranged, and the general plan sketched; convivial songs and lyrics.

1811.

Life of Philip Hackert completed; the first book of Autobiography completed.

1812.

Second book of Autobiography completed, and the third begun; attempt to arrange Faust for the stage.

1813.

Third book of Autobiography completed; lyrics and minor essays.

1814.

Work of editing his Letters from Italy for the press begun; edits Cotta's new edition of his collected works in twenty volumes; writes the greater number of the poems published later under the title The West-Eastern Divan.

1815.

The editing of his Italian Journey and the new edition of his works continued; more Oriental poems for The West-Eastern Divan; poems and minor essays on theatrical and æsthetic subjects.

1816.

First volume of the Italian Journey completed; proof-reading and revision in connection with the Cotta edition of his collected works; optical studies recommenced; essay on Shakspere as a Dramatist; the second volume of the Italian Journey begun; fourth book of Autobiography sketched; ballads and songs; more poems for the Divan.

1817.

Essay on the Study of Botany; essay on his First Acquaintance with Schiller; the second volume of the Italian Journey completed; essays on scientific subjects (morphology) and plastic art; Studies of the Formation of Clouds; the West-

Eastern Divan continued; contributions to the journal, Art and Antiquity.

1818.

More contributions to the journal, Art and Antiquity; optical and artistic studies.

1819.

Completes the West-Eastern Divan and the revision of the Cotta edition of his works; osteological and optical studies (*os intermaxillare.*)

1820.

Essays on Natural History and Morphology; contributions to Art and Antiquity; poems, tales, and reviews; Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre continued.

1821.

Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre finished; contributions to Art and Antiquity; continues the fourth book of Autobiography; contributions to Natural Science and Morphology; a short tale (Not Too Far) commenced; short poems.

1822.

Description of the campaign in France; modern Greek ballads translated; essays on Meteorology, and continuation of contributions to Natural Science and Morphology; æsthetic essays and reviews; lyrics.

1823.

Contributions to Art and Antiquity, and to Morphology, continued; essay on German Architecture; numerous essays and treatises on scientific subjects.

1824.

Begins editing his correspondence with Schiller; contributions to Art and Antiquity continued; botanical and morphological studies; treatises on Comparative Osteology and other scientific subjects; poems and reviews.

1825.

Meteorological studies; fourth book of Autobiography continued; labor on the second part of Faust resumed; part of the fifth act written; Art and Antiquity; Helena (printed as fourth act of second part of Faust) continued; Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre continued; modern Greek love songs; begins preparing for the press a new edition of his collected works in forty volumes.

1826.

Helena completed; contributions to Art and Antiquity; Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre continued and partly remodeled; poems, and a tale entitled The Child and the Lion; fragments of an essay on Dante; the Ballad Literature of the Servians, etc.; continues the second part of Faust.

1827.

Further studies of Servian literature, ancient and modern; fragments on Chinese and Bohemian poetry; essays on French and modern German literature; contributions to Art and Antiquity; Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre continued; second part of Faust continued; reviews and poems.

1828.

Second part of Faust continued; also Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre; essays on literary subjects (on national poetry, etc.); contributions to Art and Antiquity; begins editing his letters written during his second sojourn in Rome.

1829.

Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre completed; letters, written during his second sojourn in Rome, edited and revision completed; second part of Faust continued.

1830.

Preface to Carlyle's Life of Schiller; second part of Faust continued; also fourth volume of Autobiography; the work of preparing the forty-volume edition of his writings for the press completed; miscellaneous essays on æsthetic and scientific subjects.

1831.

The second part of Faust and the fourth volume of Autobiography completed; essays on botanical subjects (on the Spiral Tendency of Vegetation; Effect of my Work on the Metamorphoses of Plants.)

1832.

Fragment on Plastic Anatomy; on the Rainbow; review of a work by Geoffrey de St. Hilaire. Dies March 22, 1832.

A COMMENTARY ON GOETHE'S FAUST.

FIRST AND SECOND PART.

FAUST.

I.

"A WORK of art," says Goethe, "can be comprehended by the head only with the assistance of the heart."[1] The eyes of the heart see more deeply than those of the head; they detect the hidden life-currents which impart the vital throb and movement to the poet's work. To no literary production is this maxim of the master's more strictly applicable than to his own "Faust."

How a work of art should be judged.

Viewed merely as an intellectual phenomenon "Faust" is marvelous indeed, singularly stimulating, — an encyclopedia of wise and subtle sayings. But like the sacred writings of the nations it has a deeper, symbolic character; it hides a treasured secret which yields only to reverent and sympathetic study. It has a surface meaning to the superficial (and a very beautiful and valuable one), and a richer and more precious lesson to him who delves deep enough to find it.

Symbolic significance of "Faust."

The poem is so inextricably interwoven with the poet's life that the latter may well be regarded as a continued living commentary on the former. Its first conception dating back to his student days (1770), and the work having been completed only a few

Inextricably interwoven with the poet's life.

[1] Riemer's *Mittheilungen über Goethe*, vol. i. p. 487.

months before his death (1832), it spans his long and eventful career like a rainbow bridge, revealing in brilliant colors the tumultuous passion of his youth, the struggles and aspirations of his manhood, and the wisdom of his serene old age. A minute and intimate acquaintance with Goethe's life is therefore indispensable to a complete understanding of "Faust;" and how many have the time and the patience to wade through the constantly accumulating literature of biographies, commentaries, correspondence, and table-talk which every new year produces in such bewildering abundance! And yet there is hardly one among these many publications which the student can ignore with impunity, — hardly one which does not throw new light upon some unexplored corner of Goethe's labyrinthine existence. For this existence in its totality was a prophecy of well-nigh all that this century has achieved, — a prophecy which our own age has already in part verified, and which succeeding ages will still further verify. It therefore requires a multitude of eyes to follow the onward course of the multifarious currents of thought of which he was the fountain-head; every fresh discovery seems to bear some relation to him, and by its reflex light to elucidate some word of his, some passage in his writings which may hitherto have appeared obscure or unintelligible. In science, for instance, how fruitful have his conjectures been, how stimulating his suggestions? And even his errors, — were they not invariably based upon some truth of too colossal scope for the stultified specialists of his own day to fathom? His much-abused doctrine of the unity of all natural phenomena, of the fundamental identity of all being, distinctly points the way toward the modern theory of evolution, of which it is something more than a vague anticipation. Adhering rigidly to this same thought, and applying it to all the kingdoms of nature, he discovered (by pure *a priori* reasoning) the intermaxillary bone, and advanced his theory of the

Biographical material constantly increasing.

Goethe anticipated Darwin's theory of evolution.

metamorphosis of plants, which no scientist would now think of disputing. And much more which the clear-sighted poet, gazing upon nature in all her grand totality, foresaw or vaguely divined, science is now, by her own empiric method, laboring to prove, advancing slowly but surely in the path which he indicated. For, like Faust, Goethe was, even "in his obscurest aspiration, ever conscious of the right way."

Science advancing in the path which Goethe indicated.

Then, to gain an approximate idea of the universality of his genius, consider his profound knowledge of art, his comprehensive studies of past and contemporary literature, his practical skill and energy in the performance of the duties which his official position imposed upon him. And the intellectual results of all this varied activity he continued for more than sixty years to embody in books which, being all, in a measure, autobiographical records of a mind grandly equipped and of magnificent proportions, constitute a royal bequest to humanity which can never lose its value. No one can read them and penetrate into their meaning without experiencing a spiritual growth, a clearing away of mental cobwebs, a delightful widening of his horizon. He may take exception to many things, and occasionally his prejudices may be roughly dealt with; but he will be roused to thought, and he will erelong learn to see more deeply and to see much to which he was blind before.

The universality of his genius.

A royal bequest to humanity.

I would not say that this stimulus to investigation is the chief charm of "Faust." I know that I never read the soul-stirring soliloquies or Faust's discussions with Mephistopheles without feeling a decided disinclination to rest satisfied with the common, shallow solutions of every-day problems; without desiring to descend into the engine-chambers of creation and watch the working of its hidden machinery. The chief ethical value of the poem rests in its symbolic significance as typical of the spirit

The effect of reading "Faust."

and tendency of modern times; it is the subtlest essence of the century, which has crystallized itself in the passionate sighs, meditations, and despair of this Promethean spirit who yearned to overleap the boundaries of human knowledge. It is the heart history of the century which Goethe has written; and it required an intellect like his, of wide scope and athletic stature, and an eye that swept the whole spiritual horizon of the age, to originate a type which, although distinctly individual, unites in the range as in the limitations of its being so much that is universally human that all nations have been forced to recognize it as typical.

"Faust" typical of the spirit of modern times.

A universally human type.

It was at Strasburg, in the early days of his Gothic enthusiasm, that Goethe's attention was first attracted toward the Faust legend. The story itself, which in the form of a puppet-play was frequently represented on public squares during the great German fairs, was, no doubt, familiar to him from his childhood. But in Strasburg, where the Middle Ages still linger like a haunting presence in the dim and narrow streets, and the great cathedral still tells its story of mediæval faith and devotion, the legend began to assume a fresh significance, and it occurred to him to mould it into a drama that was to express the deepest needs and yearnings of his own Gothic nature. He had no Hellenic theories of art to disturb him then, and the majestic calm of his old age had not yet risen before his mind's eye as an ideal worthy of pursuit; he had no allegorical masks to haunt him, no borrowed mythology to force his creative activity into foreign channels. With the cheerful conviction of a young and fiery soul, he looked upon himself as the type of his kind, and upon his own experience as typical of the experience of the whole race. He wrote flowery orations on Shakspere, and a treatise ardently eulogistic of Gothic architecture. He was a Goth, and as such could fathom all the dim profundity of meaning in a Gothic legend and fashion into warm and energetic

Goethe's first discovery of the Faust legend.

Goethe's Gothic youth.

language all the pathos and passion that were laboring for expression through its crude and chaotic material. According to his habit, however, he did not immediately commit his idea to paper, but carried it about with him for several years, until it assumed a definite and tangible shape.

Chronology of "Faust."

The first soliloquy, Faust's first conversation with Wagner, and the ballad of the "King of Thule" were written in the years 1774 and 1775; the first meeting with Gretchen, the scene in the bed-room, the garden scene, and Faust's and Mephistopheles' promenade probably came into existence during the same period. In 1790 the first edition, the so-called Faust Fragment, was published, containing all the above-mentioned scenes, and besides the cathedral scene, the Witches' Kitchen and the second dialogue with Mephistopheles, beginning with the words, —

"Und was der ganzen Menschheit zugetheilt ist
Will ich in meinem innern selbst geniessen,"

the interview with the student and Auerbach's Keller.

New scenes in the edition of 1808.

In the complete edition which appeared in 1808 the following scenes are accordingly new: both the prologues, the soliloquy of Faust from Wagner's exit, the attempt at suicide and its interruption by the Easter songs, the promenade before the city gate, the first conjuration of Mephistopheles, and the second dialogue up to the above quoted words; further, the brief appearance of Valentin and all the rest that succeeds the cathedral scene. The Fragment of 1790 ends with Gretchen's fainting and the cry, —

"Nachbarin, euer Fläschchen."

Two scenes change places.

It is worthy of notice that the scene entitled "Forest and Cavern" in the Fragment is placed immediately after the scene "At the Fountain;" consequently, after Gretchen's fall. As we shall see in our later exposition of the drama, it is not difficult to conjecture why Goethe changed its position in the completed edition.

II.

"IHR naht euch wieder, schwankende Gestalten" hints at the feeling with which the poet (about 1797) once more approaches the cherished work of his youth. Twenty-four years have elapsed since it engaged his attention; the friends who joyously listened to his song in those early days are dead or scattered through the world; their forms rise again in his memory as his eye lingers over the familiar pages.

The dedication.

It is well known with what reluctance Goethe returned to a work which once he had laid behind him; his interest in it was, generally, merely an historical one, and he would refer to it as "a piece of his worn-out wardrobe," "a cast-off serpent-skin."[1] If ever he discovered a fault in a published drama or poem, he jocosely remarked, he was always sure to mend it by committing another one.[2] He outgrew so completely his youthful self that he was obliged to suspend judgment respecting those of his works which preceded his Italian journey.[3] Even the Faust Fragment, which had once embodied the very problem of his existence, which had been "flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone," seemed no longer a living part of him, and it was chiefly Schiller's high estimate of it which induced him to resume his labor ere

"A cast-off serpent-skin."

Reluctance to resume labor on "Faust" after his return from Italy.

[1] Riemer's *Mittheilungen über Goethe*, vol. i. p. 304.

[2] Ibid. p. 301.

[3] Vide *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret.* Bohn Standard Library, London, 1874, pp. 11, 12.

it was too late. How little he himself at first valued it, may be inferred from the expressions "*diese barbarische Composition*," "*Possen*," "*Fratze*," which are repeatedly applied to "Faust" in the correspondence with Schiller. Nor is this so strange as perhaps it may appear. Goethe's style, once passionately responsive to the whole gamut of human emotions, now moved with a certain grave stateliness in sedate trimeters and pentameters; his artistic creed had undergone a radical change, and the whole tone and purpose of his life were no longer the same. As for his style, if we compare it at its two extremes, it is difficult to close one's eyes to the fact that it has lost in range and power what it has gained in elegance; in the new portions of the edition of 1808, however, it is yet both flexible and vigorous enough to adapt itself to, and to sustain, the mighty thoughts which it is required to convey.

The change of style retards the progress of "Faust."

The lines, —

> "Mein Lied ertönt der unbekannten Menge,
> Ihr Beifall selbst macht meinem Herzen bang,"

recall Goethe's perfect indifference toward his public. He read his works to his intimate friends and rejoiced in their understanding and appreciation of them; but he never had the inspiring consciousness of speaking to the hearts of a whole nation. When he refers to humanity at large[1] it is usually with a certain aristocratic disdain. "The multitude, the majority," he observed to the Chancellor von Müller, "is necessarily always absurd and perverse; for it likes comfort, and the false is always more comfortable than the truth. The latter must be found by earnest seeking, must be viewed and applied regardless of consequences; but the false adapts itself to every lazy, self-indulgent or foolish individual, and is like a varnish with

Goethe's contempt for his public.

"The majority always absurd."

[1] *Goethe's Unterhaltungen mit dem Kanzler Fr. von Müller.* Stuttgart, 1870, p. 126.

which one easily tinges everything." Another remark, quoted by Von Müller, is even more pointed. "After all," Goethe says, "I have always studied nature and art in a very selfish manner, that is, for the sake of gaining knowledge. I have written on these subjects in order to add still further to my own culture. What other people make out of it is of no account to me."

"I have studied nature in a selfish manner."

It is hardly just, perhaps, to interpret literally a confidential oral utterance to a friend; but where a number of utterances, scattered through a long period of years, tend in the same direction, they certainly argue the existence of the sentiment which they convey. Riemer, who spent thirty years in constant association with Goethe, is very emphatic on this point, and quotes lavishly from his correspondence and conversation to prove his absolute indifference to the public. And yet he admits that the poet was grieved at the coldness with which his "Iphigenia" and "Tasso" were received, works in which "he had transfused so much of his best heart-blood;" and there is abundant evidence to show that the scorn with which the scientific world treated his discoveries in anatomy and botany, and his theory of colors, never ceased to be a source of irritation to him.

Indifference to the public, and yet dependence upon its approval.

These statements are not necessarily at variance; they go to prove that Goethe, like the majority of his kind, although wishing to persuade himself that he labored only for himself and for his own select circle of friends, nevertheless was not, at heart, so totally indifferent to the opinion of the world as he believed himself to be.

The well-known æsthetician, Friedrich Vischer,[1] calls the Prelude on the Stage "a humorous letter of apology" with which the author sends his torso out into the world. In his opinion the drama, even in the con-

The Prelude on the Stage.

[1] *Goethe's Faust. Neue Beiträge zur Kritik des Gedichts*, von Friedrich Vischer. Stuttgart, 1875, p. 18.

dition in which we now have it, is a torso, though as such certainly a herculean one; it presents, as he thinks, many *lacunæ*, leaps, and inequalities in the elucidation of which he displays much learning and critical sagacity. The idea of the Prelude is taken from the Hindoo drama "Sakuntala," which Goethe knew in translation.

The manager, who takes a purely practical and business view of the situation, appeals to the poet and the Merry-Andrew, begging them to help him out of his dilemma. He knows well the taste of the public. "They come to look, but they prefer to stare;" they love novel and violent incidents, extravagant emotions, and a lavish display of spectacular effects. Let there be no lack of suns, moons, stars, fire and lightning, — a mass containing a little of everything, and the more varied the better. Then the wise as well as the foolish will find something to delight in, and you are on the broad road to fortune and popularity. The public are unfortunately no longer as unsophisticated as one might desire; they read the daily papers and are accustomed to hear of strange occurrences. Therefore exert yourselves to the utmost to meet their demands; throw your ideals overboard; look at your audience more closely and descend to their level.

The manager's appeal to the poet and the Merry-Andrew.

The public read the daily papers.

This is the manager's philosophy, embodying so much of that plausible, Mephistophelean common sense which one may feel to be fallacious, but which is still so difficult to refute in argument. It is as if Goethe had here anticipated the psychological antithesis of Faust and Mephisto in the poet and the manager. The latter, feeling the dignity of his lofty calling, and disdaining to profane it in mere time service to the "motley multitude," breaks out in passionate resentment at the manager's demand: —

Anticipation of the antithesis of Faust and Mephistopheles.

> "O sprich mir nicht von jener bunten Menge,
> Bei deren Anblick uns der Geist entflieht."

One recognizes at once Goethe's own voice, rebelling against the necessity which, during the many years of his superintendence of the Weimar stage, compelled him to consult the depraved taste of an uncultivated public, which made him indirectly give the authority of his approval to Kotzebue's lachrymose tragedies and Zacharias Werner's miraculous martyr-plays.[1] The poet's sublimely impassioned protest ("Geh' hin und such dir einen andern Knecht") against the sordid, matter-of-fact view of his calling, represented by the manager, undoubtedly gathers some of its fire and vehemence from the defiant feeling aroused in Goethe's own bosom by the coolness with which his greatest works had been received. The Faust Fragment, for instance, had been estimated at its true worth by a few friends of the author (Jacobi, Schiller, Steffens) and some of the more clear-sighted critics, like Huber and A. W. Schlegel, had given it a more or less qualified approval. But on the public at large the book seemed to have made no impression whatever, and the sale of the very limited edition had been slow and unsatisfactory. "Tasso" and "Iphigenia" had met with a similar fate, and for his scientific treatises Goethe could hardly, when his fame was at its height, find a publisher.

Reference to Goethe's experience in Weimar.

The poet's protest against the manager's view.

The reception of the Faust Fragment.

The Merry-Andrew is very nearly identical with the popular Hanswurst, whom Madam Neuber, in 1737, at Gottsched's instigation, solemnly banished from the German stage. In strolling companies, such as the present is represented to be, playing in improvised booths of boards, he was, however, yet one of the principal attractions. His notion of the drama does not essentially differ from that of the manager; only, having

The Merry-Andrew.

[1] Von Müller (*Unterhaltungen*, p. 5) quotes the following remark of Goethe's, apropos of Oehlenschläger's desire to see his *Correggio* represented on the Weimar stage: "To be sure, I had accepted [Werner's] *Wanda*; but the fact that I had committed one folly is no reason why I should commit ten."

nothing at stake, he can afford to view the situation from its humorous side. He is the representative of the easy, epicurean, *laissez-faire* philosophy of life, which is shared by such a large number of the public, which, no less than the crude utilitarianism of the manager, drags the poet downward, tempting him to sacrifice his noblest aspiration, to live in a lower region of his soul, to court ephemeral success, by a sordid compromise with Mammon.[1]

The *laissez-faire* philosophy.

The Prologue in Heaven, as every one will recognize, is modeled after the scene in the Book of Job, where the Lord gathers the heavenly hosts about him and finds Satan in the midst of them. The chant of the archangels, with which the scene opens, is a marvel of rhythm and melody. Who would have suspected that the German language, which we are accustomed to call harsh, had rhythmical resources like these — organ-tones, so deep and sonorous, and syllabic harmonies so rich, so varied, and still with a certain stately monotony, suggestive of endless expanses of space and time![2] There is an exalted purity in the language, and a

Prologue in Heaven.

The chant of the archangels.

[1] In regard to the final words of the Prelude (Vom Himmel, durch die Welt zur Hölle) Vischer (*Neue Beiträge*, p. 25) has the following note, which nearly coincides with Bayard Taylor's note to the same passage (translation of *Faust*, vol. i. p. 225): "And finally Goethe, as a joke, deceives the reader with the appearance that Faust in the end goes to hell. It has been said above that the words hardly admit of any other interpretation. Goethe, who was fond of mystification, must have chuckled as he thought: 'Now we shall see if they will swallow that.'"

[2] I cannot but think that Bayard Taylor's rendering of this chant is the greatest triumph which an English translator has as yet achieved. He has understood to perfection how to produce corresponding effects by the skillful blending of the strong home-bred Saxon and the stately Latin polysyllables. Let any one who wishes to convince himself, compare the verse, —

Bayard Taylor's translation of the chant

"Und schnell und unbegreiflich schnelle," —

with Mr. Taylor's version, which I cannot refrain from quoting: —

"And swift, and swift beyond conceiving,
The splendor of the world goes round,

sense of calm continuity in the alternating male and female rhymes, which tend to heighten the impression of the infinite serenity and gentleness befitting creatures whose eyes could fathom this grand panorama of universal harmony and order amid universal motion.

Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael.

The poet represents the three archangels — Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael — gazing down upon our solar system, seeing the sun accomplishing its "predestined journey" through space, surrounded by its planets, which again circle around the central body, and revolve upon their axes, turning now their illuminated, now their darkened, halves toward the celestial beholders. Raphael apostrophizes the sun which

Raphael's apostrophe to the sun.

> "sings, in emulation,
> 'Mid brotner-spheres, his ancient round :
> His path predestined through Creation
> He ends with steps of thunder-sound."

The idea of the sun's giving forth a sound as he speeds away on his thunder-march (*Donnergang*) through creation makes the whole exalted spectacle wonderfully vivid and impressive. It is a stroke of realism which, as it were,

> Day's Eden-brightness still relieving
> The awful Night's intense profound :
> *The ocean-tides in foam are breaking,*
> *Against the rocks' deep bases hurled,*
> And both, the spheric race partaking,
> Eternal, swift, are onward whirled ! "

Is not the English here fully as fine as the German ? Again, a much more wonderful feat, in point of difficulty, occurs on p. 32, in the rendering of the Easter choruses. The brief dactylic lines, requiring, also, dactylic rhymes (of which there are but few in the English language), must have been a severe test of the translator's skill. I place the German and the English version side by side, and leave the reader to judge : —

" Ist er in Werdelust	" Is he in glow of birth
Schaffender Freude nah ?	Rapture creative near ?
Ach, auf der Erde Brust	Ah, to the woe of earth
Sind wir zum Leide da."	Still are we native here."

Here the melody and the extremely difficult metres are reproduced without the sacrifice of the minutest shade of meaning.

individualizes the scene and affords a resting-place for the sense amid all the bewildering vastness of the circling infinitudes. Gabriel praises the beauty of the earth with its alternating day and night, whirling onward in "swift, eternal, spheric race," and Michael, concentrating his attention upon the mighty phenomena that gird our planet "with a chain of deepest action" in their "wrathful energy," sings of the indestructible harmony which everywhere prevails in spite of the raging of "rival storms," and "the flaming desolation" which blazes in "the crashing path" of the thunder-bolt. Finally, the three in chorus repeat the refrain of the first stanza, emphasizing the thought of the eternal regularity and order represented by the gentle movement of the day, —

Gabriel praises the earth.

Indestructible harmony.

> "Thy lofty works uncomprehended
> Are glorious, as on Creation's day."

Amid these scenes of celestial harmony, Mephistopheles, the spirit of negation, the son of chaos, is now introduced. To him the moral world, which chiefly engages his attention, is miserably bad, and he can see none of the universal splendor and brightness which the archangels praise. He even attempts to parody their song, and in a humorous fashion calls God to account for having made the chief inhabitant of his world such a wretched failure, —

Mephisto appears.

> "The little God o' the world sticks to the same old way,
> And is as whimsical as on Creation's day." [1]

Now the thought lies near that the author did not intend this chant of the archangels merely as a glorification of the astronomical universe, and the very pointed moral antithesis produced by the introduction of Mephistopheles makes the conclusion inevitable, that the whole scene, besides its self-evident sur-

Symbolic meaning of the scene.

[1] Here, as in most cases, where I have quoted in English, I have used Bayard Taylor's version.

face-meaning, has a deeper symbolic significance, and is intended as a key to the interpretation of the succeeding drama. Is it not probable that Goethe reasoned something like this: In the physical world an infinite succession of heavenly bodies is guided in their spheres by eternal, unchangeable laws, and their vast and complex order of manifold revolutions is maintained without the slightest jar or disturbance; is it not equally rational to believe that laws, as comprehensive and inscrutable, are at work amid the seeming conflict and disorder of human existence, even though our vision be too limited to survey, and our reason too shallow to comprehend them?[1] As the gentle, uniform movement of the day remains unaffected by "the wrathful energy" of lightning, storm, and all other momentary disturbances, is there not in the moral universe, amid all individual sorrow, misery, and destruction a steady, uninterrupted evolution toward a better state? Do not the many (*i. e.* the race) benefit by the bitter experience or even the apparent sacrifice of the few?

The harmony of the moral universe.

It was not in Goethe's nature to philosophize; and even if, as I am inclined to think, these were his thoughts, he would have shunned to express them explicitly in so many words. But in his large living symbols he often embodied truths of such scope and profundity that the philosophers have not until this day ceased to break their heads in their endeavors to interpret them.

Mephistopheles, then, calls God's attention to the miserable condition of humanity: they are in fact so wretched, he says, that even he can hardly find it in his heart to add to their burden. If God had not endowed them with that little glimmering of light which they call reason and which only enables them to be "far beastlier than any beast," they would, as he thinks, lead a much more quiet and rational existence. God then asks Mephisto if he knows his servant Faust (and if there be

Mephisto's parley with the Lord.

[1] Vischer: *Neue Beiträge*, p. 207.

any lack of reverence in having the Lord put this question, the author's precedent in the biblical story must excuse it), to which the devil responds with a very striking characterization, showing that he must have had his eye on Faust for some time, as he already knows his nature so thoroughly: —

"Know'st thou my servant Faust?"

> "Forsooth he serves you after strange devices:
> No earthly meat or drink the fool suffices:
> His spirit's ferment far aspireth;
> Half conscious of his frenzied, crazed unrest,
> The fairest stars from heaven he requireth,
> From earth the highest raptures and the best,
> And all the near and far that he desireth
> Fails to subdue the tumult of his breast."

We have here the key-note of Faust's character; what, for want of a better term, I shall call his *Titanism*, *i. e.* his yearning to break down the natural limitations of his earthly condition, his passionate aspiration for some dimly-divined higher state. It is the Titan once more trying to scale the unattainable heavens. In this Titanic capacity Faust is represented as embodying the noblest aspirations of the race, — is in fact the type of the race, in the sense that the highest developed individual of a species is its truest representative. It shows what latent possibilities there are in the species, what relative perfection under favorable conditions it is capable of reaching. God, therefore, in challenging Mephistopheles to lead Faust "away from his fountain-head," to conquer and debase him, stakes his own dominion over the human race. If you can corrupt and permanently subjugate this strong soul, he reasons, then the rest are at your mercy. Mephisto offers a wager which God with optimistic confidence accepts: —

The key-note of Faust's character.

God challenges Mephisto to lead Faust astray.

> "To trap him, let thy snares be planted,
> And him with thee be downward led;
> Then stand abashed when thou art forced to say:
> A good man, through obscurest aspiration,
> Has still an instinct of the one true way."

The prize of the wager.

The prize of the wager is Faust's soul; if the devil succeeds in rooting out all that is good from it, it is to belong to him; otherwise, it is to remain the Lord's.

The significance of the wager.

The typical quality of this wager cannot be sufficiently emphasized. As a game of hazard merely for the possession of one human soul it would appear decidedly flippant, besides being cruelly unjust to the soul in question, upon which the devil now concentrates all the energy of his power, while the heavenly hosts (as far as we can learn from the text) take no measures for its protection. But, even though the latter objection be still apparently valid, the whole drama gains a higher dignity and significance by being lifted into the realm of eternal and universal thought. The entire scene becomes so manifestly (like its biblical model) a mythological symbol, expressive of certain large ideas which could be clothed only in this form, that the seeming irreverence of the wager vanishes before the colossal magnitude of the thought. If any one be in doubt as to the correctness of this view, let him compare this with the stanza with which the Second Part closes. It is natural to suppose that here, if anywhere, the poet would give a hint as to how he wished his work to be judged. The scene is again in heaven, where the *Chorus Mysticus* sings, —

Faust's dangerous position.

A mythological symbol.

> "*All things transitory*
> *But as symbols are sent:*
> Earth's insufficiency
> Here grows to event."

The destiny of the human race typified in Faust's career.

It is accordingly the destiny of the human race, such as the poet saw it, which is typified in Faust's career — in his daring aspirations, in his fall and suffering, and in his final salvation. It is the most vital and most complex problems of life which are involved in these varied scenes of pathos and mirth, and even

if no positive solution of them is offered, Goethe has, at all events, an undeniably vigorous fashion of dealing with them; there is a healthful energy and freedom in his speculation, and an amplitude of vision which sees, and enables us to see, law and order in the midst of seeming chaos.[1]

[1] Instead of dealing with Mephistopheles' character piecemeal, as it is developed in the drama, I have preferred to gather its various elements in the conjuration scene, where a tolerably exhaustive analysis will be found.

III.

THE opening lines of the monologue represent Faust as a man of encyclopædic learning, who has mastered the *omne scibile* of his age. The drama here coincides with the various puppet-plays, all of which concur in giving Faust's impatience at the shallowness of human knowledge as his reason for resorting to superhuman aid. His original prototype, however, as the legend describes him, seems to have been actuated by no higher motive than a desire for notoriety, "because it appeared to him quite a distinguished happiness to be able to command mighty spirits and by their aid to perform wonderful deeds." But this phantom of the old legend, as Kreyssig expresses it, "has grown warm and living in the arms of the young and ardent poet."[1] Goethe breathed his own Titanic, passionate soul into it, and a human heart began to beat and human emotions to surge and labor in its breast. Faust, as we now have him, is one of those eternal, purely human types which are confined to no one age or century, but will have their counterparts in all ages as long as humanity continues to harbor the Promethean spark in its bosom.

Faust's first soliloquy.

Difference between Goethe's Faust and the Faust of the puppet-plays.

Goethe, like all his companions of the Storm and Stress Period, had a peculiar sympathy with this cast of genius. They had all the same heaven-scaling tendencies, the same contempt for the achievements of the past in science, literature and religion, the same daring resolution to rebuild the world, within

Goethe's sympathy with the Titanism of Faust.

[1] *Vorlesungen über Goethe's Faust.* Von Fr. Kreyssig, Berlin, 1866, p. 47.

their own special province, on a broader and freer basis, in stricter conformity to nature. They despised the laboriously constructed systems of learned pedants in academies and universities, and rejected with youthful impatience the slow, empiric methods by which they labored to add to human knowledge. By a so-called return to nature they believed to have solved all the riddles of existence and hoped by a bold leap to possess themselves of the absolute truth. To be sure, Goethe never shared in these follies to the same extent as the more extravagant members of the school (Lenz, Klinger, Basedow); even in the days of his wildest Titanism he always retained a strong ballast of common sense which saved him from the disgusting excesses in which some of his comrades went to ruin. But it still remains significant that the first scenes of "Faust" were written while he was under the influence of this school, and that the drama, although in a much ennobled form, embodies many of the chief ideas which the Storm and Stress had promulgated. In its inmost being, therefore, Faust's spirit is closely akin to Goethe's own, and the magnificent, lyrical spontaneity and fervor of Faust's utterances in the first Fragment is the more easily accounted for by this innate sympathy between the author and his hero. In his later days, when the Faust-mood had long been a thing of the past, his voice had no longer such a volume of tone, such a wide gamut of direct, forcible, and fiery expression. We look in vain in "Tasso," "Iphigenia," and even in his later lyrics for such warmly glowing and throbbing language, such a glorious redundancy of powerful epithets, such absolute sway over all the resources of sound and sense.

The first scenes written under the influence of the Storm and Stress.

German commentators have expended much labor and research in ascertaining just how much of Goethe's personal emotions and experiences have entered directly or indirectly into the composition of his drama. It is a well-known fact that he seldom wrote

How far "Faust" was autobiographical.

anything which did not bear some relation to some incident or experience of his own life; that his writings are, as he himself expressed it, one life-long confession. Referring to "Faust" in his "Wahrheit und Dichtung," he makes the following remark: "I, too, had drifted about in all sorts of studies, and had soon enough come to suspect their worthlessness. I had made all sorts of ventures in life, and had returned from each with ever greater disgust and vexation."[1] Again, in the autobiography there is a very delightful chapter devoted to his student life in Leipsic, and his vain attempts while there to arouse an interest in the drowsy lectures of pedantic professors of philosophy and jurisprudence. In his opinion of these sciences, and his reasons for his ill success in their pursuit, we hear again an echo of Faust's voice. But there is no need of multiplying examples; there is hardly a scene in the whole drama from which parallel instances might not be drawn.

Quotation from Goethe's autobiography.

The monologue opens in a tone of perfect discouragement, —

Opening of Faust's first soliloquy.

"Habe nun, ach! Philosophie,
Juristerei und Medicin,
Und leider auch Theologie
Durchaus studiert, mit heissem Bemühn,
Da steh' ich nun, ich armer Thor!
Und bin so klug, als wie zuvor."

The words are nearly identical with those of the puppet plays,[2] only cast in a rhythmical and more spirited form. And the conclusion is the same: —

"Es möchte kein Hund so länger leben!
Drum hab' ich mich der Magie ergeben," etc.

But here an important divergence occurs. It is not for the sake of fame, not to perform miraculous deeds, that

[1] Quoted by Kreyssig: *Vorlesungen über Goethe's Faust*, pp. 29, 30.

[2] See Bayard Taylor's translation, Kennett edition, vol. i. pp. 230, 231, where the opening passages of the various puppet-plays are given in full.

Goethe's hero has devoted himself to the study of magic. It is in order that he may know the world in its inmost being, that he may explore its germs and productive forces, and, as a teacher of youth, may henceforth be spared the humiliation of "dealing in empty words," of "talking of things which he does not know." It is not the overweening pride of youth which speaks thus, but the bitter experience of a long life spent in earnest but fruitless endeavors to reach beyond the mere shallows of science which satisfy the vulgar, to penetrate to the deepest sources of human knowledge. As the beautifully mournful apostrophe to the moon shows, the many years passed among retorts and dusty folios have not yet succeeded in quelling the ardent spirit of the old scholar; the blood still pulsates vigorously in his veins, —

Faust's motive for resorting to magic.

Faust's youthful vigor.

> "But would that I, on mountains grand,
> Amid thy blessed light could stand,
> With spirits through mountain-caverns hover,
> Float in thy twilight the meadows over,
> And, freed from the fumes of lore that swathe me,
> To health in thy dewy fountains bathe me!"

all of which rheumatic scholars of fifty would regard as unpardonable eccentricity. There is a refreshing naturalness in Faust's subsequent description of his "verfluchtes, dumpfes Mauerloch," — a healthy unconsciousness of all rules of academic elegance. His hunger for a naked contemplation of Nature, undimmed by "the fumes of knowledge," leads to the conjuration of the earth-spirit, *the personification of the life of nature in its grand totality.* But this naked, absolute contemplation mortal eyes cannot endure; Faust shrinks from the sight of the spirit, averting his face from what he has so long yearned to see. As a finite being, man is incapable of viewing the absolute truth; only through many obscuring mediums, and in brief and

Hunger for the naked contemplation of Nature.

Definition of the earth-spirit.

transient glimpses, can the truth be revealed to him. Therefore the earth-spirit is terrible to behold. But, it might be urged, man is himself part of this grand totality of nature's life, consequently part of the earth-spirit, and accordingly his equal; and, as the Greek philosophers asserted, like is only known by like. Still Faust is incapable of knowing the spirit, —

Why Faust could not endure the sight of the spirit.

> "Du gleichst dem Geist, den du begreifst,
> Nicht mir!"

The difference is here a quantitative rather than a qualitative one. To use the words of Vischer: "We should, according to our nature, be able to comprehend the earth-spirit, because we resemble him, and resemble him because we could comprehend him; for the child is of the same flesh and blood as its progenitor. But *this* progenitor is so infinitely greater than each one of his innumerable children that the identity of being is too much curtailed by the difference in quantity. Faust is right in regarding recognition as qualitative equality; . . . but he is greatly in the wrong in wishing to ignore the enormous distance in extent and power which separates the individual being from the essence of being."

Quotation from Fr. Vischer.

After the disappearance of the spirit, Faust is interrupted in his impetuous exclamations by the entrance of his famulus, Wagner, who supposes him to be declaiming a Greek tragedy, and is unwilling to lose such a chance for self-improvement. Wagner is the most precious type of the dry, plodding, and conscientious pedant which any literature has to show, — a type which abounds in our own as in the German universities, and which has by no means become extinct since Goethe made its features familiar to the world. Can anything be more delightful than the contrast between this dusty, sapless old parchment and the fervid, aspiring Faust? The one so shallow and so honestly satisfied with his shallowness; the other,

Wagner, Faust's famulus.

Contrast between Faust and Wagner.

with all his profundity and his brilliant endowments, feeling grieved and humiliated by his limitations. What makes the Philistine so delicious and at the same time so humanly intelligible is the humor with which he is drawn as well as the entire absence of humor in his own character. You laugh at him behind his back, but he is never aware of it. It would make him extremely unhappy to suspect that he was capable of being viewed in a humorous light, that he was less venerable in the eyes of others than he is in his own. His sedate joy at the sight of a genuine manuscript text, his good-natured self-importance, his appreciation of rhetoric (the art of saying nothing in an admirable manner), and the guileless though learned stupidity of his answers to Faust's heart-felt outbursts of skepticism and self-reproach on the promenade, — these are all masterly touches, and in their *tout ensemble* complete the mental and physical physiognomy of one of the most inimitable figures in the long gallery of Goethe's artistic creations.

Characterization of Wagner.

There is hardly a line in the continuation of the monologue after Wagner's exit which is not fraught with profound philosophic meaning. One cannot help wondering, while rejoicing in the overflowing fullness of thought which here everywhere holds mind and sense spell-bound, in what mood Mr. Emerson can have read "Faust" when he finds it "a little too modern and intelligible."[1] Every page bristles with vigorous epigrammatic maxims, which although naturally hyperbolic, as the hero's mood requires, nevertheless embody truths of transcendent value. It is in this power of transforming the results of abstract speculation into a world of emotional conflict, of seething and burning passion, that the genius of the author most brilliantly asserts itself. Dryly and dogmatically stated in

Profundity of meaning in the scene.

Mr. Emerson's criticism on "Faust."

[1] *Letters and Social Aims.* By Ralph Waldo Emerson. Little Classic edition, p. 59.

a university lecture-room, these philosophical postulates would seem harmless enough, but under the vivifying touch of the poet they throb and glow with the life of human agony and pathos.

Faust's despair.

But a moment ago, on the verge of breaking down the barrier which separated him from the contemplation of absolute truth, Faust is now the more bitterly conscious of the defeat of his dearest aspirations: —

Quotations from Taylor's translation.

"I, image of the Godhead, who began —
Deeming Eternal Truth secure in nearness —
To sun myself in heavenly light and clearness,
And laid aside the earthly man; —
I, more than Cherub, whose free force had planned
To flow through Nature's veins in glad pulsation,
To reach beyond, enjoying in creation
The life of Gods, behold my expiation!
A thunder-word hath swept me from my stand.
. . . . . .
Ah, every deed of ours, no less than every sorrow
Impedes the onward march of life.
Some alien substance more and more is cleaving
To all the mind conceives of grand and fair;
When this world's Good is won by our achieving,
The Better, then, is named a cheat and snare.
The fine emotions, whence our lives we mould,
Lie in the earthly tumult dumb and cold."

Faust resolves to end his life.

Thwarted in his endeavor to comprehend the source of all being, stunned and blinded by the naked contemplation for which he had so long hungered in vain, hemmed in on all sides by the narrow barriers of his earthly condition, life has no longer any worth to him, and he determines to end it. He has no childish fear of the fate that is awaiting him, —

"A fiery chariot, borne on buoyant pinions,
Sweeps near me now! I soon shall ready be
To pierce the ether's high, unknown dominions,
To reach new spheres of pure activity!"

The Easter bells.

With "cheerful resolution" he seizes the phial of poison and lifts it to his lips, when suddenly the sound of bells and the choral songs, which in German

cities greet the Easter morning, arrest his hand; he pauses, listens, and a flood of tender recollections from his childhood and youth, associated with the festival of the resurrection of the Lord, rush in upon him, the tears start to his eyes, and "Earth takes back her child." The chants continue and he stands listening in moved, reverent solemnity:— and choral chants.

"Has He victoriously
Burst from the vaulted
Grave, and all-gloriously
Now sits exalted?
Is he in glow of birth
Rapture creative near?
Ah, to the woe of earth
Still are we native here.
. . . .
Christ is arisen
Out of Corruption's womb:
Burst ye the prison,
Break from your gloom!"

Whether the scene is operatic or not (and German commentators persist in holding it unworthy of the serious purpose of the drama), it is not to be denied that it is beautiful, full of tender feeling, and, when enacted on the stage, marvelously effective. The sweet and humanly sympathetic melancholy of Faust in the next scene, before the city gate, on the following day, is but the natural extension of the mood that has taken possession of him during the night. The reveberation of the Easter bells is still lingering in his soul, and the chants of the angels, the disciples, and the penitent women have tuned him into mournful accord with the mirth and folly and struggle of the unthinking multitude. The philosopher, in the lofty solitude of his abstract speculation, feels that there are still bonds which he would be loath to sever, which bind him to the common herd of men with their small aims and cares, and their happy ignorance of that region of thought wherein he moves and has his being. Exposition of the scene.

How differently does Wagner view the crowd of merry holiday-seekers! With intellectual superciliousness he, as it were, gathers up the skirts of his garments for fear of having them soiled by contact with the *ignobile vulgus*: —

Wagner's attitude toward the *ignobile vulgus*.

"To stroll with you, Sir Doctor, flatters;
'T is honor, profit unto me.
But I, alone, would shun these shallow matters,
Since all that 's coarse provokes my enmity.
This fiddling, shouting, ten-pin rolling
I hate, — these noises of the throng:
They rave as Satan were their sports controlling,
And call it mirth, and call it song!"

The terse realism with which each group, without artificial "posing" as asides to the reader, characterizes itself as it passes by is as happy as (in the French sense) it is unacademic. Especially fine, and smacking of the soil, is the comfortable, corpulent citizen who likes nothing better on Sundays and holidays than

Terse realism.

"Gossiping of war and war's array
When down in Turkey, far away,
The foreign people are a-fighting."

The violent self-accusations of Faust in his subsequent conversation with Wagner are the final reaction after the *exalté* mood of the night, and as such are hardly to be interpreted with absolute literalness. As he looks back upon his past life, with its slow toil and honest delusions from beyond "the fullness of spirit-presence" of that hour, it has something of the appearance of a banquet-hall on the morning after the feast, when the candles are blown out and the shutters opened. The keen sense of the futility of all his labors embitters his judgment of his past activity, and makes it appear grotesque and even wicked. And it is in this mood that the emissary of Satan is able to approach him and cast his toils about him. As in the old legend, he shows himself in the shape of a black poodle,

Faust's self-accusations.

A favorable mood for Satan to approach him.

which here courses in ever narrowing circles around the learned pair. Faust at once recognizes something unusual about the animal, while Wagner, with complacent garrulity, makes light of his master's apprehensions, and utters harmless platitudes about the virtues of the dog "when he is well educated."

Faust returns to his study, followed by the poodle.

The shadows grow denser, the peace of evening enfolds the landscape, and Faust returns home to his solitary study, followed by the poodle.

"Behind me field and meadow sleeping,
I leave in deep, prophetic night,
Within whose dread and holy keeping
The better soul awakes to light.
The wild desires no longer win us,
The deeds of passion cease to chain;
The love of Man revives within us,
The love of God revives again.

. . . . . .

Ah, when within our narrow chamber
The lamp with friendly lustre glows,
Flames in the breast each faded ember,
And in the heart, itself that knows;
Then Hope again lends sweet assistance,
And Reason then resumes her speech:
One yearns the rivers of existence,
The very founts of Life, to reach."

There is a happy restfulness in these lines which a scholar can appreciate, who, after a day of alien sights and sounds, returns to the peace of his own familiar study. The emotions awakened in Faust by the Easter choruses are revived by the sense of communion with his fellowmen, and by that festal feeling which, somehow, pervades the atmosphere of the Old World on the great historic festivals. For the philosopher, even though he be not a believer in the traditional Christianity, cannot emancipate himself from these impalpable influences which surround him from his childhood, and in a Christian country form the very air he breathes.

The impalpable influence of the Easter festival.

If he be a sympathetic and impressible mind, like Faust, the purely human side of the worship must necessarily appeal to him; very likely a hundred recollections of his early life cluster around it, and he cannot assume an entirely impartial and coldly critical attitude toward it, as he would, for instance, toward Islam or Buddhism. That Faust, after having been defeated in his attempt to reach the absolute truth through rational speculation, and having been humbled in the dust by the earth-spirit, should once more seek refuge in the revelation which he believed himself to have outgrown, is to me a very natural and a very beautiful *motif*. At all events, as a momentary impulse to give the Bible another trial before rejecting it, the scene involves no psychological inconsistency. After his successive defeats Faust was naturally wavering, and by temperament he was hot-headed and impulsive. It is difficult, therefore, to comprehend the severity with which Vischer attacks this attempt at Bible exegesis, calling it "an offense against the consistency of the first scenes." [1]

Faust's Bible exegesis.

Faust selects the opening words of the Gospel of St. John in the original Greek, and first renders them according to the accepted version: "In the beginning was the *Word*." But to ascribe the origin of the universe to a word, even though it be the word of God, seems to him too unphilosophical to be seriously entertained. "The Word," he exclaims, —

"In the beginning was the Word."

> "Impossible so high to rate it, —
> And otherwise must I translate it,
> If by the Spirit I am truly taught.
> Then thus: "In the beginning was the *Thought*."

[1] Vischer: *Neue Beiträge*, p. 276: "Dass es ein Verstosz gegen die Consequenz der ersten Scenen ist, wenn Faust die Wahrheit bei der Offenbarung im positiv christlichen Sinne des Worts sucht, diess hat die Kritik längst nicht übersehen." And again: "Aber was Goethe nun bringt, ist doch sonderbar und auf ganz andere Weise dunkel als die ersten Monologen . . . . sie [die Exegese] sieht aus als wolle der Dichter sagen: da seht ob ich nicht auch philosophiren kann."

But neither does this satisfy him. Is thought in itself creative? It lies behind the Word, is a more primal force than the Word. But does it not presuppose something already existing? Then what? Force? Then the passage should read: "In the beginning was Force." One would have imagined that Faust would have stopped here, if he could delve no deeper. But, by a most singular leap, he throws away the result of his previous speculation and boldly writes, "In the beginning was the *Deed*," which surely is a mere declaration of mental bankruptcy. Practically Faust says: "Let me cut the Gordian knot, if I cannot untie it." The Deed, as being in the beginning — as the primal creative cause — is, as Goethe undoubtedly would have admitted, a far shallower solution of the problem than either of the three foregoing ones; since it presupposes the existence of Thought and Force, if not necessarily of the Word. From a philological point of view, Faust's endeavors to stretch the meaning of the Greek λόγος may be open to criticism, but that can hardly lessen the psychological value of the scene. If it were not for the words: "The Spirit aids me, now I see the light," which immediately precede the last reckless translation, one might have supposed that it was intended merely as an expression of impatience on Faust's part, and of disgust at his powerlessness to grapple even with the idea of the infinite.

"Thought." "Force." "The Deed." The final translation unsatisfactory.

Mephisto, to whom biblical exegesis is not a congenial occupation, has, in the mean while (still in his canine disguise) been making desperate efforts to distract Faust's attention. The conjuration scene follows and the poodle is forced "to undisguise himself," and finally appears as a traveling scholar, a shape for which, according to Roman Catholic tradition, he has always had a particular fondness, while to Protestants he has preferred to show himself in the robes of a priest.

The poodle becomes unruly.

IV.

THE self-characterization of Mephisto, which now follows, is perhaps the most difficult, as surely it is one of the profoundest passages in the whole drama. In reply to Faust's question, who he is, he calls himself, —

Characterization of Mephistopheles.

> "*Ein Theil von jener Kraft,*
> *Die stets das Böse will und stets das Gute schafft.*"

or, translated, —

> "*A part of that power*
> *Which always wills the Bad and always works the Good.*"

FAUST.

"What hidden sense in this enigma lies?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

"I am the Spirit that denies!
And justly so! for all things, from the Void
Called forth, deserve to be destroyed:
'T were better, then, were naught created.
Thus all which you as Sin have rated, —
Destruction, — aught with evil blent, —
That is my proper element."

The frankness of Mephisto's self-definition.

At first sight, the extreme frankness of Mephisto's self-definition has an air almost of *naïveté;* but more closely considered, it argues rather the most refined subtlety. In the first place, would it not be very singular to represent the devil as so humbly convinced of the futility of all his destructive work, nay, of his very existence? The question then lies

near, does he himself believe in the correctness of his definition? Surely he does not. The positive truth, in this instance, is the result of two negatives: it is a devil (a negative existence) who speaks, and he speaks what he does not believe. He manifestly adapts his tactics with much shrewdness to Faust's state, representing himself as on the whole harmless, and at the same time giving his answer an appearance of fearless, decisive logic which must be very refreshing to the scholar who has so long been grappling in vain with these misty problems. Further, he calls himself "*a part* of that power," etc.; *i. e.* a partial embodiment of the power, an individual. The power has no absolute existence in one central, representative being, but is scattered in thousands of individuals; in other words (according to the author) there is no devil, but devils. Whether Goethe had forgotten this, in 1788, when he wrote the scene in the Witches' Kitchen and made the witch exclaim, —

The truth in this case the result of two negatives.

No devil, but devils.

> "Reason and sense forsake my brain,
> Since I behold Squire Satan again,"

is difficult to determine. It is not impossible, however, that he uses the term "Satan" in a generic sense as he has formerly used "devil." In the legend Faust first conjures up a spirit of terrible form and countenance who announces himself as "a prince and no servant in the nether world," and who promises to send one of his angels of darkness to serve and minister to him; whereupon Mephistopheles appears.

Apparent discrepancy.

The conception of evil as mere negativity — not as a positive power eternally opposed to good — is the fundamental thought in "Faust." Mephisto, therefore, further characterizes himself as —

Evil as negativity.

> "A part of the part, once all, in primal night,
> Part of the Darkness which brought forth the Light,
> The haughty Light which now disputes the space,
> And claims of Mother Night her ancient place."

It is extremely difficult to deal with so abstruse an idea; but I shall still make an attempt, proceeding at least so far as my logic can be induced to accompany me. If anything may be said to be previous to creation, it is the void, the darkness, with which Mephisto identifies himself. And darkness is no existence, — it is the absence of light, — consequently a negative idea. But now the problem presents itself: how can you embody in an existence something negative, which is but the negation of existence? A negative existence, although I have purposely used the expression above, is after all a self-contradiction; and still, this is what Mephisto in his inmost essence is. If, then, the poet had carried his own logic to its last extreme, he could not have represented Mephisto at all, and without him, what would Faust have been? We will therefore temporarily dismiss our logic and *assume* that the negative is a force, and as such can be represented. Mephisto is then the result. And with what consummate mastery and consistency the author has drawn him! How humanly intelligible he has made him, without entirely removing the element of dread which still lurks like a dimly felt presence in the background of his character, and sends a cold shudder through us when we least expect it. Dante, Milton, and Klopstock made their devil a solemn and defiant creature, exalted in terrible majesty; but it had occurred to no one before Goethe to give him a gentlemanly bearing, a touch of roguery, and appreciation of humor. The old nursery devil, the *diabolus vulgaris*, was an object of dread no longer to modern men and women. His horns, his cloven foot and fiery breath, robbed him of his reality; they were too evidently mere mythological paraphernalia to command respect in the *salons* of the nineteenth century. The devil, if he expects to retain his power, cannot afford to ignore Spencer and Huxley and Darwin. He must keep up with

"The void," "the darkness," "the primal night."

"A negative existence?"

Mephisto's gentlemanly bearing.

The *diabolus vulgaris* no longer an object of dread.

the times in science and literature and philosophy. He must be entertaining and gentlemanly with gentlemen, sarcastic and "amusing" with the ladies, polished and "intellectual" in Boston, well-tailored and dandyish in New York, and profound and philosophical in Germany. The devil, to be dangerous, must be mentally closely akin to you, and becomes harmless if he be your inferior in culture. The same Mephisto, who in Faust's days walked about in scarlet mantle, tights, and a cock's feather in his cap, has steadily kept pace with the changes of style, and is now irreproachably attired according to the latest fashion-plates; or, to abandon the metaphor, our idea of evil, like all our other ideas, is subject to constant evolution.

The devil keeps up with the times.

Goethe was, no doubt, well aware that, as soon as he endowed his personification of negativity (the void, the darkness, the primal night being all negative ideas) with a malignant purpose to destroy, *i. e.* to reduce to its own state, he could no longer strictly adhere to his own logic; it then became a positive power, and, as such, differing but slightly from the Christian idea of evil which he wished to combat. This problem, however, troubled him but little; he solved it, as far as it was capable of solution, by clothing his philosophical purpose in the popular tradition, embodied in the Faust legend, and left the contradiction to take care of itself. Mephistopheles defines frankly his negative nature, and then acts throughout the drama as such a creature, assuming that it could exist, would undoubtedly have acted.

A logical discrepancy.

Goethe's use of the popular tradition.

But in the creation of Mephistopheles there was another purpose, which the author evidently had much more at heart and one which involved no logical contradiction. In the Prologue in Heaven God is represented not only as tolerating this evil sprite, but as giving him to man as a comrade: —

The devil given to man as a comrade.

"The like of thee have never moved my hate.
Of all the bold, denying Spirits,
The waggish knave least trouble doth create.
Man's active nature, flagging, seeks too soon the level;
Unqualified repose he learns to crave;
Whence, willingly, the comrade him I gave,
Who works, excites, and must create as devil."

Evil indispensable in the world as now constituted.

God, then, according to Goethe, does not hate evil, but recognizes it as a necessary element in the grand cosmic organism, as an indispensable instrument for the accomplishment of good.[1] "To regard evil as something merely permitted by God is a superficial idea; it is pre-ordained in the divine plan of the world, not as evil, however, not as separated from human progress, which, considered in its totality, is its result. . . . .

Evil as the intriguer in human history.

Evil, then, is the intriguer in the drama of human history, without which it would come to a standstill, without which there could be no action, no progressive movement." Regarded merely as an accident not foreseen by God, something that had to be made the best of, when once it was there, it is unworthy of our own idea of God and conflicts with the divine omniscience. Thus, as far as I can judge, Goethe reasoned. Whether this, as might appear at the first glance, excuses the evil-doer, is a question which I hardly dare approach, as it would lead me too far away from my immediate purpose. But if I have understood Goethe aright, he would have answered with an emphatic denial. Evil, as a stimulant to deed, to creative activity, is an element of progress; as selfish indulgence, producing indolence and intellectual inactivity, it tends downward and causes cessation of spiritual life.[2] It is in this

This principle does not excuse the evil-doer.

[1] Vischer: *Neue Beiträge*, p. 217.

[2] "Evil [is] a ferment without which there would be no movement in history. It might seem as if this were a dangerous doctrine which would excuse the criminal. But this significance has evil only to him who takes a higher point of view [*für den Ueberschauenden*], who recognizes it in its totality as a stimulus and a lever, and above all as an apparent force which

respect comparable to poisons which in certain solutions stimulate the vital forces of the human system and are useful as medicines, while in their undiluted state they have the directly opposite effect, causing instant cessation of the animal life. If there are material things which have this double action upon the physical system, may there not be moral agencies, too, that have analogous effects upon the moral system? The final conclusion derived from these premises would then be, *that evil, in its essence, is not an absolute, but a relative idea.* I am fully conscious that this exposition opens the gate to a host of kindred questions which belong properly to the science of ethics and cannot be treated in an æsthetic criticism. My purpose has been only to define, as far as I have been able, the problem which is involved in the present drama. I do not flatter myself that I have solved it.

Evil not an absolute but a relative idea.

It is perfectly consistent with Mephistopheles' negative nature that he has selected fire as his own proper element, — the only one in which no germ of life can thrive or even exist. It is further quite in keeping with the above definition that he hates all benevolent activity, and steadily endeavors to lead Faust into excessive sensual indulgence, so that his intellectual strength may be gradually weakened and his nobler self be lulled to sleep. But in order to make this logically intelligible, it is necessary to consider once more our premises. The negative principle meets us in our daily life in the form of *limitation.* As individuals, we are on every side of our nature strictly limited; and Faust's first guilt consisted in his endeavor to break down

Mephisto the personification of evil in the above sense.

Evil as limitation.

creates the good thereby that it requires to be conquered. Whoever, standing in the midst of the struggles of life, encounters it upon his way, would act very perversely if, relying upon the doctrine of its indispensability, he would feel himself justified in permitting it, nay, in doing it; he would then destroy the principal reason for its indispensability, namely, that it challenges to resistance, that accordingly it is a destructive power to him who indulges it." Vischer's *Neue Beiträge*, pp. 357, 358.

these barriers, not so much outward toward his fellow-men, as upward toward the infinite. That Goethe himself had considerable sympathy with this Titanism in his hero is evident throughout the poem. In the legend this constitutes Faust's chief offense, and becomes the instrument of his damnation; Goethe makes it the means of his salvation. Every guilt, in its origin, springs from this sense of limitation and the natural desire to break through it. It is an encroachment upon your neighbor's moral or physical territory, a negation of his rights, an extension of your limitations and a violation of his. Theft, adultery, murder, all easily group themselves under this category. Where it assumes the form of ambition, rivalry, business competition, this endeavor to extend your limitations, although not in its essence unselfish and noble, is one of the strongest motors in human civilization, and produces results which are undeniably good. Where it ignores the law, — the barriers which society has erected for its own protection, — we call it evil. But in its deepest, hidden root it is but two manifestations of the same principle. This universal human instinct to encroach upon one's neighbor's territory we call selfishness, and it is by a perpetual appeal to this instinct in Faust that Mephisto gains his temporary victories over him. It is the devil within him who readily responds to the devil without. He shows him a beautiful woman; the selfish passion which desires but its own gratification, heedless of her rights, her happiness, and her fate, plunges them both into ruin; and this first misdeed carries a series of fatal consequences in its train.

Faust's guilt in the legend is his Titanism.

Illustrations of the above principle.

Whenever Faust momentarily, as in the "Forest and Cavern" scene, rises again to the contemplation of lofty themes; whenever, as in Margaret's bed-chamber, a tender emotion takes possession of him, Mephisto is always at hand with his pitiless cynicism, with his "cold devil's fist" strangling the short-lived illusion. His shrewd, worldly rea-

son is so plausible, common sense is undeniably on his side; if a vote were to be taken, all the solid men of the neighborhood would agree with him. Then there is the instinct within you which echoes the voice of the tempter, prompting you to take a cool and unsentimental view of the situation, cautioning you against any excess of generosity, which after all would only bring you ridicule or pitying shoulder-shrugs. It is in this capacity, as the personification of common sense, that Mephisto is most dangerous. And what a marvelous keenness of insight it shows on the part of the poet, that he has seen into the very heart of hearts of this changeful and versatile demon, and forced him to unmask himself in all his manifold disguises! Even though he be but the embodiment of an abstract idea, how living and organically consistent he is! How vividly his sharp and sallow physiognomy, with its ironical smile, rises before the imagination!

Mephisto's shrewd, worldly common sense.

There is a natural reverence (what the Germans call *Pietät*) which makes one loath to dissect a living, artistic creation and subject it to the analytical probe; critics, to be sure, are much given to this kind of psychological vivisection. But in spite of Buckle and Taine, there always remains something half miraculous about a great man and his work which no amount of analysis can either account for or dispel. Goethe has, however, in his autobiography given many hints to the critics which they have not failed to make the most of. Thus he intimates that Mephistopheles, if not absolutely modeled after his friend Merck, has at least derived some of his most striking characteristics from him. Merck, at the time when Goethe made his acquaintance, was an army paymaster in Darmstadt. He was a man of the most varied culture, especially well versed in modern literature, and active and skillful in business. His disappointments had embittered him against the world, and it was his wont to give free vent to his cynicism, sparing noth-

Psychological vivisection.

Merck the model for Mephisto.

V.

THE second dialogue between Faust and Mephistopheles further varies and develops the theme which formed the central thought in the opening monologue: —

Second conversation of Faust with Mephisto

> "Thou shalt abstain — renounce — refrain!
> Such is the everlasting song
> That in the ears of all men rings, —
> That unrelieved, our whole life long,
> Each hour, in passing, hoarsely sings.'

Faust's philosophy of life is essentially a eudemonistic one; his chief goal is happiness, and by happiness he means enjoyment, personal well-being. It is not to be wondered at that he has found so little satisfaction in his philosophic and scientific studies; had he been impelled, as he imagines himself to be, by a deep soul-hunger for truth, he would not have looked merely toward the final, unattainable goal, but every step on the way would have brought its own unfailing pleasure. In this respect Wagner, in his minute plodding pedantry, is wiser than he.[1] Of the blessings which flow from conscious usefulness in a limited sphere Faust has, as yet, no conception. His own acquirements he does not value for their usefulness to others, but only for the joy they were to bring to himself; and because they fail to yield him the happiness he so ardently craves, he rejects them as worthless. To subordinate himself as one of the millions of laborers for a grand universal end, which may, as yet, lie beyond his own vision, is contrary to his nature. The very depth of his insight is fatal to his happiness, because it robs him of the illusion from which,

Faust's eudemonistic philosophy.

The depth of Faust's insight fatal to his happiness.

[1] Kreyssig: *Vorlesungen über Goethe's Faust*, p. 49.

after all, the greater share of our happiness in this world springs. The vastness of his intellectual horizon enables him to see himself and his own achievements approximately in their true proportion to the universal world-life, and this is another source of misery. Were he less grandly equipped, he would, no doubt, be a happier man. The analytical tendency of his mind leads him to dissect beforehand every pleasure that may be in store for him, and having found that it is hollow, he throws it away.

> "In very terror I at morn awake,
> Upon the verge of bitter weeping,
> To see the day of disappointment break,
> To no one hope of mine — not one — its promise keeping:
> That even each joy's presentiment
> With willful cavil would diminish,
> With grinning masks of life prevent
> My mind its fairest work to finish."

We should conclude, then, that, being convinced of the worthlessness of all earthly joys, Faust would shun rather than desire them; but here a new element is introduced, the grandeur of which immediately dignifies the wild career upon which he is about to enter. Since his experience has taught him that he cannot reach the goal of humanity by the road of intellectual activity, he curses in a sublimely eloquent outbreak of passion all the illusory apparitions in the pursuit of which he has hitherto wasted his strength: —

A new element introduced.

Faust curses all the illusory joys of life.

> "Cursed be at once the high ambition
> Wherewith the mind itself deludes!
> Cursed be the glare of apparition
> That on the finer sense intrudes!
> Cursed be the lying dream's impression
> Of name and fame and laureled brow!
> Cursed all that flatters as possession,
> As wife and child, as knave and plow!
> Cursed Mammon be, when he with treasures
> To restless action spurs our fate!
> Cursed when, for soft, indulgent leisures,
> He lays for us the pillows straight!

Cursed be the vine's transcendent nectar, —
The highest favor Love lets fall!
Cursed also Hope! cursed Faith, the spectre!
And cursed be Patience most of all!"

The effect of the curse.

The curse, as will be observed, includes not only ambition, patience, hope, the idols of the past, but it embraces worldly treasures, sensuous enjoyment, love's highest favor, — the very things for the possession of which Faust, in the next moment, concludes his bargain with Mephisto. He does not expect that they will bring him happiness. What gain, then, does he hope to derive from his bargain? His "hot endeavor" in intellectual research had only served to make him aware of his fatal limitations; he could not rise qualitatively above his earthly condition; he could not approach the divine absoluteness. Now he determines to "plunge into the thick of human life," to gather in his own bosom the total experience of the race, — to expand his own self *quantitatively* into the self of humanity. Since, in spite of the lofty consciousness of strength within him, he cannot become a god, he determines to become the typical man. This is the great Titanic thought, well worthy of a nature whose very errors were grander than the virtues of meaner men: —

"But thou hast heard, 't is not of joy we 're talking.
I take the wildering whirl, enjoyment's keenest pain,
Enamored hate, exhilarant disdain.
My bosom, of its thirst for knowledge sated,
Shall not henceforth from any pang be wrested,
And all of life for all mankind created
Shall be within mine inmost being tested:
The highest, lowest forms my soul shall borrow,
Shall heap upon itself their bliss and sorrow,
And thus, my own sole self to all their selves expanded,
I too at last shall with them all be stranded!"

Faust's desire to embrace the total experience of the race.

The utter absence of illusion is glaringly manifest. The highest and the lowest form of life, the pang, the hate, the sorrow, — all that makes man man, — he will experience in his inmost being. To lead a soul of such a nobly colossal stature through all

the phases of sensual enjoyment merely for their own sake — in quest of the happiness which science had failed to yield it — would be to debase it, and Goethe, fully conscious of the dignity of the type he had created, was incapable of doing anything so inartistic and so repugnant to human feeling. He was himself no sensualist, even though he had "explored the sensual depths." A passage from a letter to Lavater (quoted by Vischer) shows that he was as usual drawing from the stores of his own experience: "Let it last as long as it will, I have, after all, heartily enjoyed with the rest a specimen bit of the world (*ein Musterstückchen der Welt*). Disgust, hope, love, labor, distress, adventures, *ennui*, hate, folly, absurdities, pleasure, things foreseen and unforeseen, deep and shallow, as chance would have it, intermingled with festivals, dances, fool's-bells, silk, and trumpery, — it is a capital way of living (*Wirthschaft*)." And the letter closes with these significant words: "Taking it all in all, dear brother, God be praised, I am quite happy in myself and in my final purpose. I have no wishes beyond those which I see coming towards me with steady pace." [1]

Letter to Lavater.

Mephisto's warning that such a universal experience is incompatible with his limitations as an individual Faust cuts short with the imperious exclamation: "Nay, but I will." As man is constituted, his experience is limited by temperament, one series of sensations excluding another. Life reflects itself in one way in the choleric temperament, while to the phlegmatic it wears an entirely different aspect, and to combine the sensations of both would be a negation of individuality, or rather its elevation into the higher unity, — the type. To use a simple illustration, in a convex mirror the image of the surrounding landscape assumes one form and in a concave mirror another; and convexity and concavity mutually exclude each other.

Individual limitations.

[1] It is significant to note that this letter is dated in 1771, consequently before a single scene of *Faust* had been written.

This is what is implied in Mephisto's answer when, half humorously, he advises Faust to go and ally himself to a poet, who understands how to combine in his imagination —

> "The courage of the lion's breed,
> The wild stag's speed,
> The Italian's fiery blood,
> The North's firm fortitude!
> Let him find for thee the secret tether
> That binds the noble and mean together,
> And teach thy pulses of youth and pleasure
> To love by rule and hate by measure!
> I 'd like, myself, such a one to see:
> Sir Microcosm his name should be."

The demon, however, without promising the impossible, knows artfully how to touch Faust's nature where it is weakest, and his appeal finds a ready response. He depicts to him the pleasures of sensuality (which, as has been said, Faust, who has not yet abandoned his Titanic delusion, does not covet for their own sake), and exhorts him to renounce all his speculative nonsense and "plunge into the thick of human life:" —

Mephisto promises sensual pleasures.

> "I say to thee, a speculative wight
> Is like a beast on moorlands lean
> That round and round some fiend misleads to evil plight,
> While all about lie pastures fresh and green."

But before following the two on their disastrous career, let us consider briefly the terms of the contract. They are somewhat more complicated than the simple agreement of the legend, where the devil promises to fulfill all Faust's wishes for the space of twenty-four years on the condition that, at the expiration of that term, Faust shall belong, body and soul, to him. Goethe's hero, in the midst of his impetuous discontent, is evidently circumspect enough not to make so rash a wager: —

Faust's contract with Mephisto.

> "When on an idler's bed I stretch myself in quiet,
> There let, at once, my record end!
> Canst thou with lying flattery rule me,
> Until self-pleased myself I see, —
> Canst thou with rich enjoyment fool me,

Let that day be the last for me!
The bet I offer.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Done!

FAUST.

And heartily!
When thus I hail the moment flying:
'Ah, still delay — thou art so fair!'
Then bind me in thy bonds undying,
My final ruin then declare!"

The meaning here is obviously this: "If thou canst quench all higher aspirations within me, so that I find absolute contentment in the pleasures thou offerest me, so that I shall cease to yearn for anything beyond the moment's enjoyment, then, and not until then, I am thine." It seems, on the whole, apart from the dangers to which Faust exposes himself in Mephisto's company, a very safe bargain to make. When the divine spark should be so utterly quenched in his soul that he would content himself with a mere animal existence (for the pleasures that Mephisto can offer are merely those of the senses), then he would, by that very fact, be the devil's victim. Mephisto evidently believes that he can accomplish this work of destruction, and, having his wager with the Lord in mind, is eager for the opportunity. As his brief soliloquy before the entrance of the student shows, he is well aware that Faust's present tendency is upward and away from him: —

The meaning of the contract.

Mephisto confident of enslaving Faust.

"Reason and knowledge only thou despise,
The highest strength in man that lies!
Let but the Lying Spirit bind thee
With magic works and shows that blind thee,
And I shall have thee fast and sure!
Fate such a bold, untrammeled spirit gave him,
As ever onwards, forwards must endure.
. . . . . .
The dream of drink shall mock but never lave him;
Refreshment shall his lips in vain implore:
Had he not made himself the devil's, naught could save him;
Still were he lost for evermore!"

The malignant purpose of the "Lying Spirit" is here boldly revealed in his own absolute want of illusion. He knows, himself, perfectly well the meanness and worthlessness of the allurements by means of which he expects to draw Faust "away from his fountain-head," and he knows further that, if he should allow him to persevere in his present tempestuous struggle for truth, he would, with all his errors and shortcomings, in the end find the right way and be permanently beyond reach of his enemy.

The terms of the contract.

It is necessary to keep in mind, throughout the drama, the terms of this contract. It is on Faust's part a wild chase for the "absolute enjoyment," for the moment of complete bliss to which he could exclaim: "Stay, thou art so fair." The following scenes in Auerbach's wine vault, the love episodes with Margaret, the Walpurgis Night, etc., represent the various phases of sensuous delight with which Mephistopheles, according to the contract, was to make Faust acquainted; but they all fail to yield that measure of bliss which alone can satisfy Faust's Titanic nature. And when at length, in the Second Part, the much-coveted moment arrives, we shall see how the tempter has outwitted himself, and how his Lord's prediction in the prologue is fulfilled, that "man, even in his obscurest endeavor, is ever conscious of the one true way."

Mephisto and the student.

The next scene, where Mephistopheles, arrayed in Faust's professorial mantle, instructs the guileless freshman, is, with all its pungent satire, so easy of comprehension that it demands nothing more than a passing comment. The delicious verdancy of the youth, just escaped from his mother's apron-strings, and the cool, poisonous irony of the disguised devil, — what an inimitable contrast they make! Behind their purely dogmatic discourse there lurks an element of living fear which makes the scene vividly dramatic. We laugh, but we secretly tremble with an apprehension like that which once we felt for Little Red Riding Hood, when she put her in-

nocent questions to the wolf reclining on her grandmother's cushions. The trustfulness with which the poor boy accepts the cunning counsel of the tempter as the inspirations of pure wisdom — how matchlessly is it portrayed! —

The student's *naïveté.*

> "My own disgust is strengthened by your speech:
> O lucky he, whom you shall teach!"

As regards the satire on the methods of academic teaching, it is evident that Mephistopheles very nearly expresses Goethe's own opinions. Many passages might be quoted from the autobiography, showing that his own impressions of logic, metaphysics, and jurisprudence were not greatly at variance with those which he here puts into the mouth of the devil. And after all, from a mere common-sense point of view, Mephistopheles is right, and the greater part of the public, outside of the "four faculties," would no doubt agree with him: —

Satire on the methods of academic instruction.

> "My worthy friend, gray are all theories,
> And green alone Life's golden tree."

Soon, however, he tires of playing the pedagogue, and displays, metaphorically speaking, the traditional claws and cloven foot under his professorial gown. In his discourse on medicine he suddenly drops his learned air, and, in a tone of experienced, worldly irony, shrewdly rouses the sensual instinct in his pupil, recommending him the office of a physician as a means of gratifying his sensuality. As we shall see in the Second Part, the germ he has planted in the young man's breast brings an abundant harvest.

Mephisto shows his hoof.

Faust and Mephisto now start together to see "first the little world and then the great." The first phase of sensuous enjoyment to which Faust is introduced is the carousal in Auerbach's Cellar in Leipsic, where Mephistopheles, as in the legend, first amuses and finally terrifies a company of merry roysterers by his magic tricks. Faust, maintaining an attitude of refined and supercilious

Auerbach's cellar.

disgust, hardly opens his mouth during the whole scene. The coarse and silly jokes of the drunken fools fill him with loathing, and he is only anxious to be gone. He is evidently not to be cajoled by allurements so cheap and so alien to his finer nature. Sensuality in this low form has no charm and no danger for him. His companion, on the other hand, is in his element; but seeing that his experiment, as regards its effect upon Faust, is a failure, he departs for new scenes of more profitable activity.

Faust's repugnance for the coarse revelry.

Before setting out on their journey Faust had complained that, with his long beard, all ease and grace of motion would fail him. As a scholar, whose life has been passed in the solitude of his study, he is unaccustomed to the ways of men, and cannot easily adapt himself to a changed mode of life. He feels himself so small in the presence of others, and is so easily embarrassed. It is a very charming touch of realism which is embodied in this half-naïve confession of Faust's. The man who has grappled with the highest problems of existence, who is conscious of the voice and strength of the god within him, and has risen to the fearless contemplation of the infinite, is embarrassed and almost bashful in the presence of those who in talent and mental calibre are far beneath him. The calm worldliness and that gentlemanly "fling," acquired only by long familiarity with "the best society," he cannot and will not imitate. As a mere piece of characterization, this touch is more telling than all the defiance and passion of the famous soliloquies. It inspires one with a kind of lurking affection for the old scholar to know that with all his greatness of soul he could be stared out of countenance by a fop.

His lack of *savoir-vivre*.

To rid Faust of these disadvantageous results of his learned seclusion, Mephistopheles conducts him to the Witches' Kitchen, where a magic potion is prepared which is to take "thirty years from off

The object of the visit to the Witches' Kitchen.

his life." To make the allurements of sensuality attractive to him, it is necessary to stimulate the lagging pulsation of his blood, to revive his passional vigor, — in a word, to make him young again. As in the previous scene, Faust is now again repelled by the cabalistic nonsense in which Mephisto delights, and demands a more rational way of regaining his lost youth. But the spade and the plow and the unmixed diet which Mephisto mockingly recommends are not to his taste, and he reluctantly consents to try the witch's art.

It is difficult to offer any comment upon the present scene without running the risk of repeating what may have been said a dozen times before. Every inch of ground has already been covered both with weighty criticism and with much unprofitable conjecture. If a pertinent thought suggests itself, a sufficient amount of research frequently proves that some German commentator has uttered it a long time ago. With this reservation, however, laying no undue claim to originality,[1] I shall try to make the meaning of the scene as

The thoroughness of German criticism.

[1] Goethe's opinions about the right of an author to borrow the ideas of another are very forcibly expressed in a conversation with Eckermann. For a poet of his rank, his position is perfectly consistent and tenable, but it would be dangerous for a lesser author to imitate him. The subject of the conversation was Byron's alleged plagiarisms. "He knows not how to help himself against the stupid attacks of his countrymen. He ought to have expressed himself more strongly against them. 'What is there, is mine,' he ought to have said, 'and whether I got it from a book or from life is of no consequence; the only point is whether I have made a right use of it.' Walter Scott used a scene from my *Egmont*, and he had a right to do so; and because he did it well, he deserves praise. He has also copied the character of Mignon in one of his novels; but whether with equal judgment is another question. Lord Byron's Transformed Devil is a continuation of Mephistopheles, and quite right, too. If, from the whim of originality, he had departed from the model, he would certainly have fared worse. Thus my Mephistopheles sings a song from Shakespeare; and why should he not? Why should I give myself the trouble of inventing one of my own, when this expressed exactly what I wanted? If, too, the prologue to my *Faust* is something like the beginning of the Book of Job, that is also quite right, and I am rather to be praised than censured." — *Eckermann's Conversations of Goethe.* Bohn's Standard Library edition, pp. 108, 109.

Goethe's opinion of Byron's alleged plagiarism.

clear as its many occult allusions will permit. Goethe was, according to Falk, greatly amused at the ingenuity of his commentators, and from the serene altitudes of his old age, when he had long outgrown the Gothic period of his life, he somewhat sweepingly characterized the confused allegories of the Witches' Kitchen as "dramatic-humoristic nonsense." The fact that it was written at the Villa Borghese, outside the walls of Rome, where the chaotic wonder-world of the north must have appeared strangely vague and meaningless to him (*abgeschmackt* is his own favorite term for it), is, no doubt, important as accounting for the singular monstrosities of form and expression with which it abounds. It is quite natural that in the presence of the calm grace and majesty of antique art, which was then accomplishing his artistic regeneration, he should feel impatient with the crudely fantastic creations of the Gothic imagination, and it is very probable that, as Bayard Taylor thinks, he intended this series of absurd fancies as a burlesque on the machinery of witchcraft and its use in literature. But if it served no better purpose, its introduction in "Faust" was hardly to be commended. Weisse and Kreyssig have advanced a theory which very ingeniously explains its *raison d'être* as an indispensable factor in the drama, and is, moreover, in perfect accord with Goethe's habits of artistic creation. According to them, Faust had concluded his contract with Mephistopheles in a moment of moral laxity and despair. But to a man whose character was intrinsically noble, and who had moved and breathed in a pure atmosphere of exalted thought, a sudden mental debasement is not possible. The single act, constituting his fall, does not leave him permanently base and degraded. It may make the second indulgence easier, but yet not easy. The refined tastes and habits which are the results of a long life of devotion to high aims will reassert themselves, will rise about him like a protecting

Dramatic-humoristic nonsense.

Goethe's impatience with the use of witchcraft in literature.

wall against the aggressive temptations. We have seen that Faust hitherto has shown a decided aversion for the forms of sensuality with which Mephistopheles has attempted to beguile him; but after he has drained the magic potion, we no longer (except, perhaps, in the forest and cavern scene) discover any trace of scholarly shyness, refined disgust, or even conscientious scruples. In the very next scene he exclaims, after the fashion of an experienced *roué*, at the first sight of Margaret, —

The effect of the witch's potion.

"Hear, of that girl I 'd have possession!"

And when Mephisto pleads that he has no power over so pure a soul, he continues, —

"Most worthy pedagogue, take heed!
Let not a word of moral law be spoken!
I claim, I tell thee, all my right;
And if that image of delight
Rest not within mine arms to-night,
At midnight is our compact broken."

Even the devil appears to be scandalized at the abruptness of the demand, and tries temporarily to evade his obligations. Faust, he says, is a regular Jack Rake, and talks almost like a Frenchman.

The devil is scandalized.

This apparent inconsistency the above-named commentators have obviated by attributing to the scene in the Witches' Kitchen, in its *tout ensemble*, and especially to the magic potion, a symbolic significance, as representing a long series of varied sensual excesses which could not be separately introduced into the drama without extending it far beyond its proper limits. It is well known that Goethe in the Second Part adopted a similar method; when he wished to represent human life in its totality, as indicating the educational processes through which Faust had to pass, he contented himself with introducing a variety of allegorical masks, thus symbolizing in a single scene what would otherwise have

The symbolic significance of the potion.

required an extension of the drama almost *in infinitum*. The well-established limitations of dramatic writings necessitated either the abandonment of his plan or the adoption of this somewhat undramatic method.

Vischer censures the suddenness of Faust's transformation.

Vischer, who evidently does not choose to accept this symbolic interpretation of the scene, censures Goethe for having so abruptly transformed his hero into a bold and cavalier *roué*. There is apparently no other alternative.

Doubtful symbolism.

How much of symbolic meaning is embodied in the tantalizing rhymes of the apes will probably always remain an open question. Whether the crown glued with sweat and blood is a prophecy of the impending French revolution, whether the witch's multiplication-table is meant to satirize the doctrine of the Trinity and the obscure terminology of science, and the male and female apes, with their talk about dice and gain and their obscure political allusions, are to represent the society in which Faust is to be made the recipient of the base enjoyments which Mephistopheles has in store for him, are conjectures which every reader of the scene will have to accept or reject, according to his pleasure. The office of a commentator is, on the whole, to suggest and to stimulate to thought on mooted questions rather than to decide them by an arbitrary dictum.

The magic form in the mirror.

The ideally beautiful woman-form which Faust sees in the magic mirror serves a similar purpose as the rejuvenating potion, — that of rousing his physical energy by a combined appeal to his sensual and his æsthetic instincts. Goethe, as all his writings and especially his "Roman Elegies" prove, had himself something of the Greek reverence for the beauty of the human form, and the delight he derived from his study of it was of a purely æsthetic nature. It is not probable, therefore, that he meant Faust's ecstasy at the sight of the fair phantom to be of a mere low and sensual origin. There is

rather something naïve and innocent in the rapturous exclamations of the middle-aged student whom the beauty of a woman's form strikes in the light of a novel discovery: —

> "If I attempt to venture near,
> Dim, as through gathering mist, her charms appear!
> A woman's form in beauty shining!
> *Can woman, then, so lovely be?*
> And must I find her body, there reclining,
> Of all the heavens the bright epitome?
> Can earth with such a thing be mated?"

This adds another charming touch to the physiognomy of the hero. With all his profound study, he has hitherto remained innocently ignorant of one of the most patent facts of existence. We seem to see the author's smile of amusement, as, in the midst of the luxuriant, sensuous life of the South, he wrought this fine bit of characterization into the portrait of his northern scholar.

A characteristic touch.

VI.

THAT the drinking of the witch's potion, whether we choose to accept its allegorical meaning or not, is also to be interpreted in the literal sense that the words imply, is evident from the fact that Faust is henceforth no more the long-bearded, middle-aged professor, but a young man with the appearance and passionate vigor of youth. A series of sensual excesses, even if, as we have seen, the psychological logic of the drama may demand it, is apt to sap the strength of the debauchee rather than restore him to youth. And still, if we accept both the literal and the symbolic significance of the act, there is, I am inclined to think, no real discrepancy, since the author's resort to magic once for all places the scene outside of the domain of natural laws. The strength which Faust has lost both by his life-long devotion to study and by his supposititious excesses are then restored to him by the potion, and he is now, in the intoxicating feeling of overflowing vitality, ready (as Mephisto expresses it) to see "a Helen in every woman." This must account for the almost brutal abruptness with which he accosts Margaret at his first sight of her on the steps of the cathedral, as well as his peremptory demand of Mephistopheles, a moment later, that "he must get that girl for him."

The rejuvenation of Faust.

No creation of dramatic fiction in modern or ancient times has taken such a vigorous hold of the popular imagination as this fair and trustful maiden, whose brief, tragic career has a power and pathos and awe in it, as if it were written by the unrelenting finger of Fate itself. The workmanship (if it be not prof-

The character of Margaret.

anation to speak of workmanship in anything so organically complete and spontaneous) has the grand simplicity of Nature's own art. Like the poet himself, she was born, not made. Her sentiment, in the first scenes, is as unpremeditated as the first tentative twitter of the early spring birds, and as Love awakens its fuller and deeper notes, it has the rapture and passion and sorrow of the nightingale. And with all this, Margaret is by no means what many critics have tried to make her, an ideal of womanhood; nor is there any reason to suppose that the poet intended her career as the typical tragedy of her sex. In the completed drama (embracing both parts) her relation to Faust has perhaps more of the character of a mere episode than our natural feeling is ready to admit; it is never pleasant to think of the sacrifice of one individual for the perfecting of another. And still this is a process which Nature is continually employing; it is well-nigh a truism to say that she is wasteful of individuals, but tenderly solicitous for the type. And Faust, as we have seen, stands here as the representative of the race. The slender, sequestered current of Margaret's life is drawn by an irresistible force into the whirlpools and rapids of a richer, deeper, and more tempestuous existence; and its volume is too small and its onward impulse too feeble to assert themselves amid the mighty confusion of forces which is still sweeping the larger life onward toward its destined goal.

Her relation to Faust an episode in the latter's career.

It is in no way inconsistent with what I have said of the organic completeness of Margaret's character, that it is in Goethe's hands entirely subordinate to the purpose of the drama. Faust is to know evil, not merely as a theory, but as an active power in his own experience. In his effort to fathom in his own being the universal experience of mankind, he must share its guilt. He must drain the cup of life to the dregs. There is but one point where he is vulnerable, and here

Her place a subordinate one in the completed poem.

Mephistopheles is to make the first breach in the stronghold of his moral character. He has the passions of a man, and especially now, after his sudden rejuvenation, is eager to obey the promptings of the demon within him. It is no longer a mere misty, philosophical desire, but the strong cravings of the flesh. Margaret must therefore be so drawn that there is a logical probability of her fall. Her innocence is that of conscious virtue, which is a long step removed from ignorance of evil. Her self-reproach after her conversation with Lisbeth, at the well, although naturally exaggerated by her remorse, still proves that she had been virtuous, first, because she knew sin to be wrong, and secondly, because society condemned it:—

Her innocence that of conscious virtue.

> "How scornfully I once reviled,
> When some poor maiden was beguiled!
> More speech than any tongue suffices
> I craved to censure others' vices.
> Black as it seemed, I blackened still,
> And blacker yet was in my will;
> *And blessed myself, and boasted high,* —
> And now — a living sin am I!"

The pertness and ready sharpness of speech with which she answers the stranger who rudely accosts her are also characteristic of the "respectable" middle class, of which the author no doubt intended her as a representative. The respectability on which this class prides itself is, it may be urged, perhaps even a better safeguard against temptation than the innocence of ignorance; but the fact that it is no absolute safeguard is sufficient for the poet's purpose. It is worthy of notice that the first object of his boyish devotion, who furnished him with a model for his Margaret, and of whom he gives such a charming account in his autobiography, belonged to this order of society, and even if his more recent recollections of his betrothed, Lillie, enriched and animated the portrait, the features of the quiet and artless

A representative of the respectable middle class.

Gretchen and Lillie.

Gretchen are still distinctly recognizable in the completed picture.

I hardly think that the dethronement of this simple maiden from the ideal heavens makes her any less charming and lovable. The warm human tints in her portrait appeal much more strongly to my sympathies than any saintly aureole, or the bloodless perfection of an ideal abstraction. Her artless vanity, her delightful garrulity about the crying baby who disturbed her night's rest, and her mother who was so strict in household affairs, and even her innocent pride in her respectability, — these are all healthy human traits which make her tangible to the sense and dear to the heart. You seem to feel in them the hearty grasp of a human hand and the warm breath of a human soul. There is nothing grand or heroic, but, on the other hand, something sweetly girlish and natural, in her little reflections before the mirror, as she braids her blonde tresses after returning from her first adventure with Faust: —

Margaret's reflections before the mirror.

> "I 'd something give, could I but say
> Who was that gentleman to-day.
> Surely a gallant man was he,
> And of a noble family;
> So much could I in his face behold, —
> And he would n't else have been so bold!"

The pathos of her obscure and narrow existence becomes only the more touching from the fact that she has not, like Faust, any great mental resources from which to gather philosophic consolation; she cannot rise to lofty heights of speculation; she has no thought of the universal world-laws that govern her destiny. She writhes and struggles ineffectually, like some poor dumb creature whose only dignity lies in its capacity for suffering. It is the nameless and unheeded tragedy in the lot of the great, blind herd of "average humanity," which the poet has gathered into a focus in this one typical life, as, indeed, Faust himself expresses it in the prison scene: —

The narrowness of her experience.

"A shudder, long unfelt, comes o'er me;
Mankind's collected woe o'erwhelms me here."

Faust in Margaret's bed-chamber.

But to return to the text; after Margaret's departure, Faust and Mephistopheles enter her bed-chamber and place a casket of precious jewels in her press. Faust, half unconsciously affected by the atmosphere of cleanliness, order, and contentment which pervades the room, throws himself into a leathern arm-chair, which he apostrophizes in a strain worthy of the most sentimental lover. He imagines his beloved with the ruddy cheeks of childhood, "grateful for the gifts the holy Christmas gave her," kissing the withered hand of her grandsire; and lifting with reverent hand the bed-curtain, he continues, —

"Here lay the child, with Life's warm essence
The tender bosom filled and fair,
And here was wrought, through holier, purer presence,
The form diviner beings wear.
And I? What drew me here with power?
How deeply am I moved, this hour!
What seek I? Why so full my heart, and sore?
Miserable Faust! I know thee now no more!"

The power of a pure and tender affection.

It is the power of a pure and tender affection, so far removed from the mere sensual attraction, which is for the first time asserting itself within him. Mephisto has no sympathy with this feeling; it is so far beyond his horizon that he cannot comprehend it. He only feels that while Faust is under the control of these sensations he is slipping out of his grasp. He therefore resorts to his usual irony, making the lover ridiculous in his own eyes. The professor is evidently not extinct in him yet; he says, —

"You look as though
To the lecture-hall you were forced to go, —
As if stood before you, gray and loath,
Physics and Metaphysics both."

It must be remembered, then, what all the following scenes sufficiently prove, that Faust henceforth is no longer in quest

merely of sensual gratification. His errors and even his guilt are somewhat redeemed by the fact that all the turbulent forces of his strong nature are now roused by a deep, overmastering love. He is bewildered by the novelty of the sensation; he struggles blindly and confusedly on, and ever plunges from one error into a worse one. In this perpetual uproar of feeling he is no longer conscious of his former desire to fathom in his own bosom all the joy and sorrow and guilt of humanity; he is accomplishing his own forgotten purpose in a way that he had never anticipated. But we ought to consider, too, that a mere feebly contemplative nature could not err as Faust errs; a cold, premeditated design would make his error base and doubly hateful. But this warm, all-encompassing human feeling imparts even to Faust's guilt that rich vital glow which enables you, through all, to feel the full-throbbing heart-beat beneath. You cannot escape the impression that it is somehow, if not the result of, at least organically coherent with, all that is best and noblest in him. He sins, not prudently, but with a hot-blooded vigor which will not relinquish its hold upon our sympathy. In his worst transgressions, as the killing of Valentin and his persuading Margaret to give the sleeping potion to her mother, he is but half responsible, Mephistopheles in every instance playing the more prominent part; especially in the latter case, we may well take it for granted that Faust was ignorant of the deadly effect of the potion. And still, even then, his guilt remains a heavy one.

The warm-blooded passionate nature of Faust.

His transgressions committed in the heat of passion.

In the following scenes the action progresses rapidly; Margaret's pious mother gives the mysterious jewelry case to the church; a parson is sent for, who, as Mephisto puts it, —

The parson bags the jewels.

> "Bagged the spangles, chains, and rings,
> As if but toad-stools were the things,
> And thanked no less, and thanked no more

Than if a sack of nuts he bore, —
Promised them fullest heavenly pay,
And deeply edified were they."

And the unctuous solemnity of his parting advice is really delicious; you know at once that his reverence had a double chin and no waist to speak of; he was not quite without humor, however, and you seem to hear him chuckling as soon as the door was closed behind him: —

"He saw at once where the game was hidden,
And viewed it with a favor stealthy.
He spake: 'That is the proper view, —
Who overcometh, winneth too.
The Holy Church has a stomach healthy:
Hath eaten many a land as forfeit,
And never yet complained of surfeit:
The Church alone, beyond all question,
Has for ill-gotten goods the right digestion.'"

The second jewelry case.

But when the second jewel case appears in the same unexplained fashion, Margaret yields to the persuasions of her neighbor, Martha Schwerdtlein, and keeps it. Then follows the quick unraveling of Mephisto's little intrigue to bring Faust and the young girl together, and finally the rendezvous in Martha's garden. With frank, childlike garrulity Margaret describes to Faust her small daily duties and cares, and he listens with a grave, lover-like devoutness, as if her words contained the profoundest wisdom. From the solitary chambers of his experience it seems all very marvelous and beautiful. The limited range of her ideas, her modest estimate of her own worth, and even the incorrectness of her speech, strike him in the light of charming, refreshing novelties. He has never suspected that in a world which presents so many intricate problems for our solution an existence so artless and simple, so unvexed by doubts and aspirations, were at all possible. His declaration of love is not long delayed, and her unfortified heart surrenders itself easily. The first kiss follows, and the promise to meet again. How delight-

Meeting in Martha's garden.

Faust's rapture at Margaret's prattle.

fully naïve is this little soliloquy of Margaret's after Faust has left her: —

> "Dear God! However is it, such
> A man can think and know so much?
> I stand ashamed and in amaze,
> And answer 'Yes' to all he says,
> A poor, unknowing child! and he, —
> I can't think what he finds in me!"

Forest and Cavern.

Having completed his inglorious conquest, Faust retires once more into his ancient stronghold of sublime meditation, or, as Mephistopheles would express it, the professor awakes in him again. He feels dimly that his relation to Margaret can never bring her any lasting happiness, and he pauses before accomplishing her ruin. If he retires now, while her love for him is nothing more than a tender, girlish sentiment, her life will soon resume its even flow; their rendezvous will fade into a mere incident, and in time be forgotten. "The God in him has not yet succumbed to the animal; the germ of his being is still uncorrupted."[1] The voice of conscience has not yet been silenced by the voice of passion; his better nature reasserts itself with renewed vigor.

The God in Faust has not yet succumbed to the animal.

In lofty energy of expression and depth of meaning this scene is unsurpassed in the whole drama. Faust addresses the earth-spirit, who, he says, has granted him all for which he prayed. Nature, which formerly impressed him as a wilderness of isolated and enigmatical phenomena, lies now revealed before him in her grand unity.[2] He can now "gaze into her bosom

Nature revealed to Faust in her grand unity.

[1] Kreyssig: *Vorlesungen über Goethe's Faust*, p. 97.

[2] Soret gives a very interesting account of the visit of the naturalist d'Alton to Goethe. In connection with the present scene the following is especially valuable: "Goethe, who in his endeavors to investigate Nature is anxious to encompass the Great Whole, stands in a disadvantageous position to every naturalist of importance who has devoted a whole life to one special object. The latter has mastered a kingdom of endless details, whilst Goethe lives more in the contemplation of great universal

as into the bosom of a friend." He has recognized the progressive development of all living creatures (*die Reihe der Lebendigen*), he sees his "brothers in air, in water, and in the silent wood." Whether it is his love which has thus suddenly cleared his vision, or the long career of sensuous impressions through which Mephistopheles had been leading him, is difficult to determine. At all events, his spiritual nature cannot, during all this time, have been so inactive as it might appear, if his experience has yielded him such a precious lesson. That his life in the senses should have quickened his sense of kinship with all living things, and thus revealed to him his own organic coherence with animated and inanimate nature, is by no means an irrational conclusion. Did not the poet himself from his manifold experience of human life rise into a lofty survey of the universal laws that underlie and govern the apparently detached facts of existence? In the moral as in the physical universe this rule is equally applicable. Laborious empiricism separated from the inborn poetic intuition will, to be sure, never lead to this grand result; but in Faust, as in Goethe, these two primal conditions were happily united.

His life in the senses has quickened his sense of kinship with Nature.

Faust has not yet solved the riddle of existence, even in the sense in which, according to Goethe, it is capable of solution. The seemingly self-evident proposition that "nothing can be perfect unto Man" represents to this heaven-scaling Prometheus a hard-won lesson, not to be blindly accepted and still less

The riddle of existence not yet solved.

laws. Thence it is that Goethe, who is always upon the track of some great synthesis, but who, from the want of knowledge of single facts, lacks a confirmation of his presentiments, seizes upon, and retains with such decided love, every connection with important naturalists. For in them he finds what he himself wants; in them he finds that which supplies his own deficiencies. He will now in a few years be eighty years old; but he does not tire of inquiries and experiments. In none of his tendencies has he come to a fixed point; he will always go on further and further, still learning and ever learning." *Eckermann's Conversations of Goethe*, Bohn's Standard Library.

to be submissively acquiesced in. Had he, at the outset of his career, accepted this maxim lightly, like the average, unaspiring mortal, his long discipline of sorrow and struggle and guilt would have been needless; but neither would he have reached that full development of his being which could be attained only through this bitter, soul-searching discipline. At the present stage his acceptance of the maxim is especially significant as showing that he has now learned to confine his aspiration within the rational limits of what is actually attainable. He will no longer waste his strength in wrestling with the Infinite. But the road upon which he is to reach the full intellectual and moral stature of a man lies, as yet, but dimly before him. He is still essentially a eudemonist, in quest of personal well-being; the ultimate aim and object of all his thought and action is himself, his own happiness. He has not yet learned that the supreme happiness always evades him who persistently seeks it. The discovery of "the deep, mysterious miracles" which his own breast enfolds represents but an unprofitable knowledge, as long as he directs all this fullness of power toward the attainment of selfish aims.

Faust has learned to confine his aspirations within rational limits.

I have said that it is the earth-spirit, to whom Faust addresses his monologue. Accepting Vischer's definition of this spirit as "the personification of the life of nature in its grand totality," it is perfectly consistent that Faust should owe to him this deep insight into the organic unity of nature. That "the spirit sublime," as Hartung and others have asserted, should refer to God is hardly credible, first, because there is no evidence in the whole drama that Faust was cognizant of Mephisto's wager with the Lord, and, secondly, because the other hypothesis much more satisfactorily explains the knowledge he has gained of Nature's secrets. But, on the other hand, the adoption of the latter theory involves a very glaring discrepancy. In the shape in which the drama

The earth-spirit, not God, addressed in the present scene.

now lies before us, it is the Lord, and not the earth-spirit, who, without Faust's knowledge, gives Mephisto to him as a comrade. Weisse,[1] and after him Vischer, obviates this difficulty by assuming the existence of an earlier, rejected plan, of which they find numerous traces in the scene in its present form. They further assume that according to this first intention it was the earth-spirit who did send Mephisto to Faust. I have not the space to repeat the elaborate argument in detail, but considering the fact that the Prologue in Heaven was not written until 1797 (consequently seven years after the publication of the Fragment), and was thus really an afterthought, the assumption seems by no means a daring one. Any one who has traced the growth of the drama through Goethe's correspondence with Merck, Zelter, and Schiller,[2] and ob-

A glaring discrepancy.

[1] *Kritik und Erläuterung des Goetheschen Faust.* Leipzig, 1837.

[2] The following extract from a letter to Schiller, dated Weimar, June 22, 1797, is interesting as showing how vague Goethe's plan for the continuation of *Faust* was, when the stimulating sympathy of his friend induced him to resume his work upon it: "As it is highly necessary for me in my present restless state to have something to do, I have determined to attack my *Faust*, and, if not finish it, at least bring it a good deal nearer to completion, *dissolving again that which already is printed*, and dispose in great masses that which already is at hand or invented; and further prepare the execution of the plan, which, after all, is nothing but an idea. This idea and its realization I have now again considered, and am in tolerable agreement with myself. Now I should wish that you would have the kindness to ponder the matter thoroughly, during some sleepless night, lay before me the demands which you would make of the whole, and *thus, like a true prophet, tell me and interpret to me my own dreams.* As the different parts of this poem, as regards tone (*Stimmung*), may be differently treated, if they only subordinate themselves to the spirit and tone of the whole; as, moreover, the whole work is subjective, I shall be able to work on it in single moments; and, at all events, I am now in condition to produce something."

Letter to Schiller concerning *Faust*, and Schiller's reply.

Schiller, with his usual earnestness, discusses, in his answer (June 23, 1797), at some length, the plan and purpose of the poem, and concludes with the following observation: "The duality of human nature and the unsuccessful attempt to combine the divine and the physical in man, one never loses sight of; and because the fable approaches and must approach the grotesque and formless, one must not stop at the plot (*Gegen-*

served the impetuous desultoriness with which he selected, rejected, and adapted new inventions to the already existing material, and who further remembers his frequent discouragement and final declaration "that the poem must once for all remain a fragment," will admit that Weisse's assumption does not involve half the disrespect for the poet's work that it frequently suffered at his own hands. When, for instance, he threw at random a bunch of "Xenien" (all bristling with personalities), which Schiller had refused for the "Musenalmanach," into the middle of "Faust," under the title of "Walpurgis-Night's Dream, or Oberon and Titania's Golden Wedding," he proved that with all his profound knowledge of art he was not always the most conscientious artist. Then again, he was fond of mystifications, and rather enjoyed giving the critics a hard nut to crack. "They come and ask me," he once said to Eckermann, "what idea I meant to embody in my 'Faust.' As if I knew that myself, and could inform them!"[1]

"Faust" must once for all remain a fragment.

The disrespect with which Goethe treated his greatest work.

I have already remarked that in the Fragment the present scene is placed after the scene "At the Fountain," when Faust has virtually already accomplished Margaret's ruin. The reason for the change of position is self-evident; Faust now pauses and reflects before the deed, and

Why the Forest and Cavern scene was placed before Margaret's ruin.

stand), but must be guided by it to ideas. In short, my demands of *Faust* are at the same time philosophical and poetic, and wherever you choose to turn, the nature of your material imposes upon you a philosophical treatment, and imagination will have to submit to the service of a rational idea."

Goethe, in an answer, written on the following day (June 24th), thanks Schiller for his interest in his work, and concludes with this significant remark: "I shall first only *try to finish off the great masses of half-arranged inventions, and bring them into accord with that which already is printed, and I shall busy myself with this so long, until the circle completes itself.*"

[1] *Conversations of Goethe*, p. 258. Bohn's Standard Library.

determines to withdraw while it is yet time. To have him philosophize grandly after the deed, and then thank "the spirit sublime" because he has given him all for which he prayed, would be almost infernal; it would be difficult for the reader to follow Faust's career with any degree of sympathy after the exhibition of such an inhuman trait.

Reminiscences of a former plan.

A careful reader, however, will discover in several passages a meaning which is not in accord with the changed purpose of the scenes. Thus the lines, —

> "Within my breast he fans a lawless fire,
> Unwearied, for that fair and lovely form:
> Thus in desire I hasten to enjoyment,
> And in enjoyment pine to feel desire," —

certainly imply that Faust's beloved was already his mistress, which, as I am led to believe, was the very appearance which the poet wished to avoid. Why else did he transfer the scene from its former to its present position? In Mephistopheles' answers there are also allusions of the same sort which it is difficult to explain away.

Mephisto unmasks himself.

The tempter has never hitherto so completely unmasked himself as in this brief, intense interview. First he taunts Faust with his professorial habits, then complains of his own hardships in serving him, and at last his cynicism, aggravated by the unnamable gesture, approaches undisguised obscenity. But in Faust's loftier moods an appeal to his sensuality does not move him. It is not until Mephisto has artfully touched the tenderest chord within him by an appeal to his compassion, that he reluctantly surrenders: —

He appeals to Faust's compassion.

> "Her time is miserably long;
> She haunts her window, watching clouds that stray
> O'er the old city-wall and far away.
> 'Were I a little bird!' so runs her song,
> Day long and half night long.
> Now she is lively, mostly sad,

Now, wept beyond her tears;
Then again quiet she appears, —
Always love-mad."

The picture of his beloved watching with tear-filled eyes the drifting clouds sinks at once deeply into Faust's yearning heart, and in his angry exclamation, "Serpent, serpent!" lies already the confession that he has been conquered. His defeat, however, if not a noble one, is not base. His final outcry against Fate, upon whom he throws the blame for his own weakness, and his impetuous self-vituperation at the thought of the ruin he has wrought, — that is all both human and lover-like: —

Faust returns to Margaret.

"Help, devil, through the coming pangs to push me;
What must be, let it quickly be!
Let fall on me her fate, and also crush me, —
One ruin whelm both her and me."

VII.

MOST of the commentators agree in regarding Faust's so-called creed as an embodiment of Goethe's own religious belief, and, no doubt, at the time when the scene was written, it expressed with tolerable adequacy his personal conviction. But, on the other hand, Goethe was the last man to attempt the writing of a creed, in the sense in which the term is usually employed. He had too great a reverence for the truth to wish to confine it within the narrow bounds of a phrase which it must, in time, necessarily outgrow. The absolute truth, he would have said, no man can fathom and no words express, and a creed is, therefore, a mere subjective expression of what one man or a great body of men at a certain time believed.[1]

Faust is catechised.

There is something exquisitely sweet and tender in Margaret's anxiety for Faust's spiritual welfare. It proves conclusively, if any proof is needed, the purity and utter unselfishness of her love for him, —

Margaret's anxiety for Faust's spiritual welfare.

> "How is 't with thy religion, pray?
> Thou art a dear, good-hearted man,
> And yet, I think, dost not incline that way."

Secure within the narrow confines of her faith, with its positive, well-defined dogmas, she cannot comprehend the large-hearted, spacious universality of her lover's thought. A faith like hers is naturally unsympathetic toward doubt;

[1] Bayard Taylor has in his notes to this scene collected a number of Goethe's utterances on religious subjects, at various periods of his life, and I can do no better than refer the reader to them.

and it is well that it should be so. A God who could not be expressed or confessed or even denied could be no God to her. He could not respond to her personal needs, and He would be deaf to her prayers. Faust's lofty declamation, therefore, leaves her cold; it sounds all very fine, she says, but, after all, there is some hitch in it. It is not Christianity. Faust does not go to confession, and he does not receive the holy sacraments, which are to her the final tests of devout faith.

Faust's creed.

At first sight it would appear as if Faust's religion, as expressed in his attempt to define the indefinable, were a purely æsthetic one, leaving out entirely the ethical element which Margaret's positive faith especially emphasizes. It may be that this appearance was intentional on the part of the poet; that he meant "the creed" to indicate only a transient state in Faust's soul-life, to be superseded, in time, by the serene wisdom of his old age, when he seeks happiness only in the unselfish deed, — in benevolent labor for the welfare of his fellow-men. But, after all, this æsthetic faith is not so destitute of the moral element as the doctrinaires of traditional Christianity seem to fear. In mounting to such lofty heights of contemplation, man rises above his baser nature and is not so easily assailable by the lower passions which dwell in the nether regions of his soul. Mr. Emerson, with his usual felicity of phrase, expresses the same conviction: "I think that the intellect and the moral sentiment are unanimous; and that though philosophy extirpates bugbears, yet it supplies the natural check to vice and polarity to the soul. I think that the wiser a man is, the more stupendous he finds the natural and moral economy, and lifts himself to a more absolute reliance." This does not by any means imply that the scholar who, like Faust, takes a larger view of the truth than the multitude, is incapable of sinning, even though he habitually moves on the alti-

Not without a moral element.

Quotation from Emerson.

tudes of his being. The voice of temptation will still, though at rarer intervals, reach him. Philosophy is, no more than positive religion, an absolute safeguard against error. But, as I have already stated, it must not be forgotten that, in Faust's case, it is by an appeal to his love, his pity, — to his nobler emotions, — that Mephistopheles regains his hold upon him, which in the foregoing scene he had well-nigh lost.

Philosophy not an absolute safeguard against error.

An exquisite touch in the characterization of Margaret is her instinctive aversion for Mephistopheles; and with what beautiful *naïveté* it is expressed: —

Margaret's aversion for Mephisto.

"I feel his presence like something ill.
I've else, for all, a kindly will,
But much as my heart to see thee yearneth,
The secret horror of him returneth;
And I think the man a knave, as I live!
If I do him wrong, may God forgive!"

And with a charming ungrammatical ardor she implores her lover to part company with him. His presence, she says, is like a weight upon her bosom; one sees at once "that he has no sympathy for nobody:" —

Ungrammatical affection.

"It overcomes me in such degree,
That wheresoe'er he meets us, even,
I feel as though I'd lost my love for thee.
When he is by, I could not pray to Heaven.
That burns within me like a flame,
And surely, Henry, 't is with thee the same."

Faust's lame and half-humorous retorts, "There must be such queer birds, however," and "There, now, is thine antipathy," bear on the face of them their insincerity, and moreover betray his inward uneasiness. He cannot explain, and is therefore only anxious to dismiss the topic. This simple, unlettered girl, who uses bad grammar and begs her lover not to kiss her hand, because it is "so nasty," is endowed with the most delicate spiritual senses, which enable her to feel instinctively the moral atmosphere

of every man who approaches her. Thus, when Faust and Mephisto have, for the first time, visited her chamber during her absence, she is, on her return, immediately conscious of some foreign, uncongenial influence. A sudden, indefinable dread comes over her, and she opens the window: —

Margaret's unerring moral instinct.

> "It is so close, so sultry here!
> And yet 't is not so warm outside.
> I feel, I know not why, such fear! —
> Would mother came! — where can she bide?
> My body 's chill and shuddering, —
> I 'm but a silly, fearsome thing."

Any sensitively organized man or woman will know what these involuntary aversions are; and Goethe, whose perceptions were most exquisitely delicate, even went so far as to believe "in the existence of a spiritual *aura*, through which impressions, independent of the external senses, might be communicated."[1]

Goethe's "spiritual *aura*."

In the following scenes the downward career of Faust and Margaret is sketched with a fiery, breathless rapidity; but the meaning of each scene is so obvious that explanations would be wholly superfluous. In the gossip with Lisbeth at the fountain, Margaret is made fully aware of the enormity, in the eyes of the world, of the sin she has committed, and she hastens to the Mother of Sorrows to pour out before her the pent-up anguish of her heart. The abrupt, tottering movement of the lines in her prayer vividly expresses the wild, tear-choked intensity of the despairing maiden's voice, as she cries out for help to her who has known the bitterness of grief, who with the sword piercing her heart looked upon her son's, that was slain: —

Rapid progress of the drama.

Margaret before the *Mater Dolorosa*.

> "Ah, past guessing,
> Beyond expressing,
> The pangs that wring my flesh and bone!

[1] Bayard Taylor's translation, vol. i., p. 286.

Why this anxious heart so burneth,
Why it trembleth, why it yearneth,
Knowest Thou, and Thou alone.

"Where'er I go, what sorrow,
What woe, what woe and sorrow
Within my bosom aches!
Alone, and ah, unsleeping,
I 'm weeping, weeping, weeping,
The heart within me breaks."

And with her simple gift of flowers she hopes to propitiate the deity she has, in the ardor of her love, offended.

Healthy realism.

In lines like these, "*Wie wühlet der Schmerz mir im Gebein*," there is a healthy, unflinching vigor, which does not pause to refine and polish, but seizes daringly the strongest and most expressive phrase, heedless of all critical scruples. And in this very directness, this apparent unconsciousness of art, the height of art is reached. What a glaring contrast this presents to the polished, classical super-refinement of the Second Part!

The murder of Valentin.

In the next scene Valentin, Margaret's brother, meets Faust in the night, before his sister's window, attacks him, and is killed. Faust, however, acts only in self-defense, and the killing is neither premeditated nor intentional. Mephisto's magic, which lames the assailant's arm, gives a deadly force to Faust's thrust. Nevertheless before the law and before his own conscience he is a murderer, and as the noise of the conflict rouses the neighborhood, he is obliged to flee. Margaret, Martha, and a crowd of people gather about the dying soldier, who loudly proclaims his sister's dishonor, and with his last breath curses her.

The character of Valentin.

The introduction and elaborate characterization of a new figure, who appears only to die, and by his death to supply a needed *motif* in the drama, may, as Düntzer[1] and others have asserted, from an ar-

[1] *Goethe's Faust.* Erster und Zweiter Theil. Zum ersten Mal vollständig erläutert. Von Heinrich Düntzer. Leipsic, 1857.

tistic point of view, be objectionable. At all events, as the drama now stands, the *motif* furnished by the murder of Valentin could not well be dispensed with. Faust's temporary abandonment of Margaret, which otherwise would be inexcusable, has now, at least, a sufficient cause. His own life is in danger, and the instinct of self-preservation demands that he should seek safety in flight. He thus remains ignorant of her imprisonment and sentence, but returns to rescue her as soon as the intelligence reaches him. The character of Valentin, a genuine type of the brave, outspoken, somewhat blustering mediæval soldier (*Landesknecht*), is drawn with all the terse, realistic strength of Goethe's best period. It is not the sin itself which excites his indignation; for very likely, like most of his fellows, he has a heavy score of his own to settle. In his brief soliloquy he never for a moment loses sight of himself. He has been proud of his fair sister, and has been fond of boasting of her beauty and excellence. Now he can boast no longer:—

The selfishness of his grief.

> "With turned-up nose each scamp may face me,
> With sneers and stinging taunts disgrace me,
> And, like a bankrupt debtor sitting,
> A chance-dropped word may set me sweating!
> Yet, though I thresh them all together,
> I cannot call them liars, either."

It is the reflection of her fall upon his own fair name which he resents, and this purely selfish resentment dictates the heartless words with which he stabs her, as he lies dying at her door.

The terrible intensity of the cathedral scene (with which the Fragment of 1790 ended) prepares the reader's mind for the insanity which overtakes the unhappy maiden with her impending ruin. Whether the evil spirit who stands behind her, mingling his relentless voice with that of the anthem, be Mephistopheles or some minor emissary of Satan is of little consequence. It is the voice of her own conscience which sounds audibly in her

The cathedral scene.

ears, filling her with dread, bewildering her thoughts, and distracting her poor, half-crazed brain. It is the first horrible forebodings of insanity, more appalling in the anguish they cause than the malady itself, which whirl her terror-haunted thought in a storm of doubt, remorse, and wild despair:—

Dies Iræ.

"Woe! woe!
Would I were free from the thoughts
That cross me, drawing hither and thither,
Despite me!
. . . . . .
I cannot breathe!
The massy pillars
Imprison me!
The vaulted arches
Crush me! — Air!"

The introduction of the stern old Gregorian chant with its inexorable voice of doom is a matchless stroke, immeasurably heightening the tragic effect of the scene:—

"*Quid sum miser tunc dicturus,*
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Cum vix justus sit securus?'

VIII.

IT will be remembered that hitherto, whenever Faust has been introduced to a scene of sensual revel, he has expressed unfeigned, emphatic disgust. In Auerbach's Cellar he disdained to take part in the low pleasures of the noisy roysterers; and in the Witches' Kitchen his refined nature recoiled from the loathsome sights and sounds in which his comrade delighted. Since then a great change must have taken place in him; his constant companionship with Mephistopheles, and the crimes which he has half involuntarily committed, have gradually acclimated him to evil. Here, in the Walpurgis Night scene, we see him for the first time sharing in Mephisto's enjoyments, plunging into the maddening whirl of the witches' Sabbath, and committing excesses which in his deeper being he despises. And still I can hardly believe (as Kreyssig[1] does) that Goethe meant by this apparent absence of scruples to represent a ready acquiescence on Faust's part in the devil's plan for his moral degradation. A sin does not always argue moral depravity. After an excited, vehement indulgence in forbidden pleasure a man's better nature is apt to reassert itself, and as long as this reaction continues the gate of salvation is never closed; but where the deed is but the natural fruit of a depraved state of mind, the soul has already lost its reactive force; it finds its instinctive, logical expression in the evil deed. That this is not the case with Faust the following scenes sufficiently prove; and by the vision of Margaret with the bloody ring around

The Walpurgis Night.

A sin does not always argue moral depravity.

[1] Kreyssig: *Vorlesungen über Goethe's Faust*, p. 106.

her neck, which suddenly sobers him in the midst of his wild revels, Goethe meant to symbolize the haunting remorse which unremittingly pursues him, and which he has vainly sought to drown in the deafening whirl of the witches' dance. He is but seeking to silence the warning voice of conscience, to drown the stormy memories which leave him no rest nor peace. Mephisto, to whom this dread apparition is most unwelcome, exerts his ingenuity to distract Faust's attention, and tells him it is Medusa, the Grecian enchantress whom Perseus slew. It is dangerous to look at her; her gaze turns the beholder into stone. But Faust is not to be thus appeased: —

The vision of Margaret.

> "Forsooth, the eyes they are of one whom, dying,
> No hand with loving pressure closed;
> That is the breast whereon I once was lying, —
> The body sweet beside which I reposed."

The opening of the scene represents Faust and Mephistopheles laboriously climbing up through the steep chasms and ravines of the Harz Mountains, on one of the peaks of which (the Brocken) the witches, according to ancient Germanic tradition, held their annual meeting on Walpurgis Night (between April 30th and May 1st). Faust is delighted at the magnificence of the scenery, which he describes in fresh, full-blooded, and energetic verse. The spring is beginning to stir within the trees, and he, too, is conscious of its gentle exhilaration. His companion, whose negative nature can take no pleasure in the signs of re-awakening life round about him, feels winter still within his body, and wishes for frost and snow. The night is growing darker; the moon is in its last quarter, and gives but little light: —

Faust and Mephisto climbing the Brocken.

> "How sadly rises, incomplete and ruddy,
> The moon's lone disk, with its belated glow."

Mephisto summons a will-o'-the-wisp, and bids him light the way before them, adding the threat that if he does not walk straight he will "blow out his

The will-o'-the-wisp.

being's flickering spark." Upwards and ever upwards they climb, the trees, the rocks, and the more distant crags assuming strange, fantastic forms as they move past them in the moonlit dusk: —

> "The giant-snouted crags, ho! ho!
> How they snort and how they blow!"[1]

The "Hoo-hoo! shoo-hoo!" of the screech owl and the long complaining note of the lonesome plover now and then break the stillness of the night; salamanders with bloated bellies and thin legs slip noiselessly through the bushes, and the huge tree-roots like twisted serpents stretch out their gnarled and crooked arms, as if to seize the wanderers in their strong embrace. Thus, by a well graded crescendo, the terror of the situation increases as they rise; the mood, symbolized by the wild landscape, grows weirder and more uncanny. At midnight a great tempest arises, upon which the witches come riding to the Brocken from all the corners of the earth. Faust is in danger of being hurled down into the abysses, and Mephisto advises him to seize hold of the ancient ribs of the rocks. Through the groaning of the boughs, the thunder of falling trunks, and the mad whistling of the tempest is heard the "infuriate glamouring song" of the witches' chorus. The following alternate choruses of witches, semi-witches, and voices from above and below and far away are a mere veiled satire, bristling with allusions to persons and to literary and personal feuds of the author's, all of an ephemeral character, and wholly unworthy of a place in an immortal work. Perfectly intelligible they can have been only to Goethe's own contemporaries; at the present day even the closest study of the literary history of that period fails to disclose their full meaning. However, even if we question the propriety of thus immortalizing poor, insignificant persons who would now hardly be re-

The witches arrive.

Obscure allusions.

[1] Translation by Shelley; quoted by Bayard Taylor.

membered, if they had not had the honor of exciting Goethe's displeasure, it must nevertheless be admitted that these choruses, with their tantalizing hints and confused mingling of wisdom and nonsense, serve their purpose in the scene, and produce the exact effect which the poet intended. One cannot expect clear and logically coherent utterances from a crowd of raving rabble, sweeping onward in a delirium of sensual excitement.

The tantalizing confusion not without a purpose.

German commentators have already performed the task of separating the dry land from the water, the ephemeral from that which is essential and abiding, in the poetic chaos of the Walpurgis Night; but all these ingenious riddles are, after all, only of secondary importance, and their solution is by no means necessary to the comprehension of the drama as a whole. Any one who cares to know what Baubo, Lilith, the Proktophantasmist, etc., are meant to symbolize will find a great deal of interesting information on these points in Bayard Taylor's notes to his translation of "Faust;" and in Düntzer's bulky and exhaustive commentary every minutest allusion in the text is examined under a critical microscope of tremendous magnifying power.

The solutions of these riddles not necessary.

While hurrying breathlessly on with the throng of screaming witches and wizards, Faust is separated from his guide, who at last finds the deafening noise and confusion too much even for him. He bids Faust keep close to him, and conducts him aside to a small company of reactionary malcontents who are seated around a fire, in aristocratic seclusion from the common herd of witches. Faust, who, as his answer shows, had hoped in this revelry of evil to find some solution of the problem itself, reluctantly yields, expressing still his desire to mount with the rest to the summit: —

Faust is separated from Mephisto.

> "Better the summit, I must own:
> There fire and whirling smoke I see.

They seek the Evil One in wild confusion:
Many enigmas there might find solution."

That Goethe cannot have failed to see that there was something very contradictory in this freak of Mephistopheles taking Faust to the Brocken to witness the witches' Sabbath, and then, in the last moment, leading him aside, preventing him from joining in the excesses of his other votaries, — this the text plainly shows. It is evident, then, that he must have had some definite reason for this singular manœuvre, even though it may be difficult to conjecture. It may be that by the thronging and pushing in the upward flight of the witches he meant to indicate the nature of evil as an element of progress, as a stimulating factor in human civilization. In this form Mephisto, as the spirit of negation, does not love evil, and wishes to keep his victim away from it. He prefers the indolent, self-absorbed indulgence of the isolated clique which the progressive century has left behind, which in stagnant self-complacency nurses its sensual comfort, for its own sake, without mingling in the storm and stress of civic action. This is unmistakably hinted at in the weak complaints of the discarded minister, as well as in those of the cashiered general, the unpopular author, and the *parvenu* who has lost the royal favor. They all praise the good old times, and ascribe their own misfortunes to the impudence of the rising generation, who will no more recognize solid worth. Here, among the nude young witches and the imbecile votaries of the senses, where self-destructive indulgence is pursued as an end in itself, and where no healthful ambition stirs the slumbering remnant of human energy, Mephisto is in his proper element, and here he invites Faust to complete his ruin. And Faust accepts the invitation; but while he is dancing madly away with the young witch, the dread vision, of which I have already spoken, rises before him, and he loses heart for all further pleasure: —

A contradictory freak.

The select coterie and its meaning.

Faust's conscience awakes amid the mad revelry.

"Mephisto, seest thou there,
Alone and far, a girl most pale and fair?
She falters on, her way scarce knowing,
As if with fettered feet that stay her going.
I must confess, it seems to me
As if my kindly Margaret were she."

The faltering gait and the scarlet band around her neck, "no broader than a knife-blade seeming," are a prophecy, of course, of her coming doom.

Intermezzo.

It is deeply to be regretted that Goethe, instead of allowing Faust to follow his generous impulse to hasten to the rescue of his beloved, compels him to sit and listen to a series of satirical epigrams which do not influence his actions and in no wise affect his fate. The epigrams are good enough, in their way, and afford the author an opportunity of lashing his literary enemies, but they have no organic connection with the drama, and, in their present position, only serve unnecessarily to retard the action. The reader, like Faust himself, is burning with anxiety for Margaret's fate, and is in no mood to listen to a mere literary diversion or a recital of the author's personal grievances.

Dreary Day.

From the moment of his departure from the Brocken, the moral crisis in Faust's life is past; he begins to tread the upward path, and Mephisto's power over him is henceforth steadily waning. The devil, even though he has succeeded in plunging him into crime and misery, has still failed to corrupt the innermost core of his being. His conscience is still wakeful, and generosity still stirs within him. He had fled from Margaret, ignorant, perhaps, of her condition, in order to save his own life; now, as soon as he hears of her misfortune, — that, bereft of reason, she has killed her own child and his, has wandered long upon the face of the earth to avoid her doom, and at last has been imprisoned, — he will listen no more to the selfish voice of prudence, but demands to be brought to her. Mephis-

Faust resolves to free Margaret from the dungeon.

topheles strives vainly to restrain his generous ardor, reminds him that there is blood upon his hands, that "avenging spirits hover over the spot where his victim fell, and lie in wait for the returning murderer." To Faust's agonized exclamations of grief he responds with icy composure: "She is not the first." To him who has from the beginning of time seen so many millions of human lives wrecked and plunged into irretrievable ruin, this wild despair at the destruction of one single insignificant life seems weak and incomprehensible. Why did Faust, he asks, enter into fellowship with him, if he cannot carry it out? Why does he wish to fly, if he is not secure against dizziness? The sorely harassed mortal can only answer with curses and vain imprecations. He calls upon the earth-spirit, "who has vouchsafed to him his apparition, who knoweth his heart and soul" (another trace of the first, abandoned plan), to transform Mephisto again into his original dog-shape, in which he first accosted the unsuspecting wanderer; he implores "the mighty, glorious spirit" to free him from this felon-comrade, "who feeds on mischief and gluts himself with ruin."

The apparent justice of Mephisto's reproaches.

It is not to be denied that, from a worldly point of view, there is some appearance of justice in Mephisto's scornful reproaches; and it is probably a dim feeling of this, on Faust's part, which drives him into these violent spasms of wrath and despair. The net into which he had leaped with open eyes has tightened about him, and he is powerless to extricate himself. It is true that he had, on the promenade with Wagner before the city gate, wished for the wings of a bird that he might rise toward the sun; he had called upon the spirits, "'twixt heaven and earth on potent errands fleeing," to lift him "toward a new and varied existence." One of the spirits had obeyed his summons, and he is now in his power. He had been impatient of the narrow lot of common mortals, and had yearned to fly through life, tasting its sweets,

and partaking too of its sorrows, but he had disdained to be bound by the duties growing out of the common relations of man with man. He had "cursed all that flatters as possession,—as wife and child, and knave and plow." Now, Mephisto argues, to make this course possible, which Faust had so ardently desired, it is necessary that he should emancipate himself from the weakness of having human emotions; he must dismiss once for all pity and love, for these feelings would fetter him to that narrow sphere which his lofty soul had scorned. This conclusion surely sounds plausible enough; but, after all, as Margaret says of her lover's creed, "there is some hitch in it." A better and, from an ethical point of view, sounder conclusion would be: If the fulfillment of your desire involves the sacrifice of all that is best and noblest within you, then the desire itself is a false and illegitimate one. If Faust does not himself immediately arrive at this latter conclusion, it is only because his mind is too absorbed in its grief to draw any logical inferences from the result of his conduct. The Second Part, however, shows that the lesson of all this guilt and suffering and despair has not been lost on him. At the present moment, he can only relieve the suffocating fullness of his heart in passionate reproaches; the cruel apathy of his companion irritates him, and gives him a good excuse for throwing upon him the whole burden of responsibility for the misfortunes which have overtaken him and her whom he loves. And this is certainly very human, and, in this instance, even excusable. What does he care for cool reason and logic; nay, what does he care for life itself, when his beloved is given over to the unfeeling hand of human justice, and is awaiting, on the morrow, the execution of her sentence! The devil, therefore, seeing that he can no longer restrain him, and knowing, moveover, that unless he yields, their contract is no more binding, reluctantly consents to lead him to

Faust had failed to emancipate himself from the feelings which fetter him to the narrow lot of mortals.

Faust curses Mephisto.

Margaret's prison, and to save her from the consequences of their common guilt.

The prose form of this scene contrasts strikingly, and scarcely favorably, with the wondrous rhythmical perfection of the rest of the drama. There can be little doubt that Bayard Taylor's conjecture is correct, that Goethe finally (in 1803) dictated the scene to Riemer in its present form, after various unsuccessful attempts to bring it into metrical conformity with the remainder of the drama. In the *Paralipomena* there are found several plans for filling up the gap between the Walpurgis Night and the prison scene; but they were all rejected, probably because Goethe felt that a rapid development of the action toward the close was of paramount importance, even if it necessitated a slight sacrifice of probability. The mere external verisimilitude he always deemed of very small importance, and the Aristotelean unities he royally ignored. If he were to account for the time which must have elapsed between the Walpurgis Night (which, according to the text, was two days after the murder of Valentin) and the concluding scene, he would have been obliged to keep Margaret still longer out of sight, and the *crescendo* in intensity and *accelerando* of motion, which are among the fundamental laws of the drama, would have been lost. Margaret has given birth to her child and killed it; she has wandered as a beggar far away from her home; she has been seized, tried, and sentenced, — a series of grave events which could hardly have transpired in less time than a month. Faust, on the other hand, aroused by the vision and disquieted by a haunting remorse, hastens away from the Brocken, and, having learned from Mephisto that Margaret's life is in danger, resolves to liberate her. We are, of course, to infer that his impetuous sorrow can brook no delay, and that he starts at once to carry out his purpose; and with Mephisto's magic horses the journey could not be a long one. It is

The prose form of the present scene.

The discrepancy in point of time.

easy to see that there is, as regards time, a glaring discrepancy here, and every reader, unless he can find some new solution of the difficulty, will have to make the best of it as it is. However, the representation of a drama is in itself an appeal to the imagination; it cannot be measured by the severe logic of time and space. Thus the action of "Faust," from the opening soliloquy to the concluding scene of the First Part, covers a period of something more than a year, while on the stage it occupies from three to four hours; and still to the spectator the illusion is complete, and his imagination takes no offense at apparent impossibilities. The imagination, then, which in the theatre rises thus superior to the laws of time, need surely not be disturbed at the discrepancy I have just pointed out.

The action covers something more than one year.

The six unrhymed lines of the next scene represent Faust and Mephisto rushing through the air on their black magic horses. They pass the Ravenstone, or place of execution, where, according to old Germanic tradition, the witches gather on the night before the bloody expiation of a crime. Faust sees them hovering with strange motions around the elevated block, and asks, shuddering, what they are doing. All the terrors with which the superstitious fancy of the Middle Ages surrounded the Ravenstone overwhelm him, and he hastens onward, lest he should come too late to deprive the headsman of his victim. The compressed brevity of the dialogue gives one a vivid idea of their speed, and the suddenness with which the horrible apparition looms up before them and again vanishes.

Night Scene at the Ravenstone.

They arrive at the dungeon; Mephisto plunges the jailer into a deep sleep, possesses himself of the keys, and gives them to Faust. The opening lines of the scene strike immediately its key-note: —

The Dungeon Scene.

> "A shudder, long unfelt, comes o'er me;
> Mankind's collected woe o'erwhelms me here."

He has reached the goal, then, for which he pined; has heaped upon himself all the joy and sorrow of his kind. But how different is the stern reality of suffering and sorrow from the mere theoretic anticipation of them in the brain of the philosopher! By his reckless experiments with human emotions, by his endeavors to encompass within himself the universal experience of the race, what has he accomplished? He has ruined the one life that was dear to him. He has, indeed, gained a sensation which his ingenious fancy had not anticipated; for he had never known, in this sense, what it meant to be the destroyer of a human life. The terrible sense of his guilt makes him pause at the heavily bolted and barred door; there, within, he hears the poor crazed girl singing: —

Faust's abundant harvest of sorrow.

"My mother, the harlot,
Who put me to death;
My father, the varlet,
Who eaten me hath!
Little sister, so good,
Laid my bones in the wood,
In the damp moss and clay:
Then was I a beautiful bird o' the wood;
Fly away! fly away!"

The fearful irrelevancy and incoherence of the ballad make one's blood run cold. As Faust unlocks the door and enters, she mistakes him for the executioner; all the horror of death seizes her; she hides her face on the pallet, then throws herself down at his feet, and implores him to spare her life: —

Margaret mistakes Faust for the executioner.

"Art thou a man, then pity my distress!"

And with touching simplicity she goes on to tell him what he knows, alas! only too well: —

"And I am yet so young, so young!
And now Death comes, and ruin!
I, too, was fair, and that was my undoing.
My love was near, but now he 's far;
Torn lies the wreath, scattered the blossoms are.
Seize me not thus so violently!

Spare me! What have I done to thee?
Let me not vainly entreat thee!
I never chanced, in all my days, to meet thee!"

She has no word of reproach for him who is the cause of her misery; once he was near, she says, now he is far away. Then follows in confused succession the thought of her wedding, — the wreath which is torn, the flowers that are scattered, — and of her child, which, as she fancies, she has fondled the whole night long. Faust, crushed with grief, and unable to listen any longer to her innocent ravings, falls upon his knees before her: —

"Here lieth one who loves thee ever,
The thraldom of thy woe to sever."

The visions she has nursed in her solitude.

Yet she fails to recognize him; but thinking that the headsman wishes to pray with her, she flings herself down at his side and calls upon the saints to help her; then the terrible visions, which her excited mind has nursed in its solitude, until they have confused her reason, rise again before her imagination: —

"Under the steps beside us,
The threshold under,
Hell heaves in thunder!
The Evil One
With terrible wrath
Seeketh a path
His prey to discover."

Her consciousness returns.

In the anguish of his heart, forgetting all considerations of prudence, Faust now calls her name loudly, and the sound of the dear familiar voice momentarily awakens her slumbering reason. In joyful agitation she springs up, the chains which he has unlocked fall from her limbs, and she clasps him tightly in her embrace. And at the touch of his hand and the sound of his voice the tragic reality of the moment vanishes. How could sorrow thrive when he was near? In a vivid retrospect she sees again the happy scenes of their past life, and lingers lovingly at the thought of each: —

"Again the street I see
Where first I looked on thee;
And the garden, brightly blooming,
Where I and Martha wait thy coming."

What a wondrous glimpse these lines afford us into the childlike, trustful soul of Margaret! This perfect abandonment to the emotion of the moment, be it joy or sorrow, is characteristic only of children and of simple, childlike souls; and the sudden transition from one extreme of emotion to the very opposite moves the heart potently by its grand simplicity and pathos.

Her perfect abandonment to the emotion of the moment.

But Faust cannot think of happiness now; he cannot tarry in her embrace, cannot return her loving caresses; he can only remind her of the danger that is threatening both of them, and urge her to flight. His apparent coldness grieves her bitterly; he will no more kiss her; he has unlearned kissing, and once he kissed her as if he would suffocate her: —

Faust urges Margaret to flee with him.

"Ah, woe! thy lips are chill,
And still.
How changed in fashion
Thy passion!
Who has done me this ill?"

to which he answers with renewed entreaties to flight: —

"Come, follow me! My darling, be more bold:
I 'll clasp thee, soon, with warmth a thousand-fold;
But follow now! 'T is all I beg of thee."

But the prospect of flight only reawakens in her the consciousness of her guilt, which the joy of his presence had made her forget. The torturing visions return, her thoughts wander in hopeless bewilderment, and her reason is again overclouded: —

Her refusal.

"Give me thy hand! 'T is not a dream!
Thy dear, dear hand! But ah, 't is wet!
Why, wipe it off! Methinks that yet
There 's blood thereon.
Ah, God! what hast thou done?
Nay, sheathe thy sword at last!
Do not affray me!"

Her insane ravings.

And as her mind continues to dwell on the images which rise before her, her vision grows intenser and she drifts hopelessly hither and thither on a sea of the wildest imaginings. She sees her child struggling in the water, she sees it sinking and rising again to the surface, and she cries aloud to him to save it. But the height of terror is reached as with a weird, realistic energy she recalls her mother's death: —

"If the mountain we had only passed!
There sits my mother upon a stone, —
I feel an icy shiver!
There sits my mother upon a stone,
And her head is wagging ever.
She beckons, she nods not, her heavy head falls o'er;
She slept so long that she wakes no more.
She slept while we were caressing:
Ah, those were the days of blessing!"

What an appalling realism there is in this picture of the mother, sitting upon a stone and ever wagging her heavy head!

Faust attempts to carry her off by force.

Finding all his prayers and entreaties to be in vain, Faust at last resolves to carry her away by force; but she resists with the violence of despair. Amid the darkness which broods over her soul she has still a dim but none the less unshakable conviction that the punishment which is awaiting her is an expiation of her crimes. There is no hope for her any more upon earth, she says. Why should she fly? They would still find her, and drag her back to the dungeon. The life which he offers her would be worse than death; for how could she tarry lovingly at the side of the man who had been the sharer in and the cause of her guilt? —

"It is so wretched, forced to beg my living,
And a bad conscience sharper misery giving."

A voluntary sacrifice.

By thus repelling the rescuing arm which is extended to her, by choosing, by a voluntary though but half-conscious act, the penalty which, even according to the cruel code of her times, she had but half

deserved, she makes her death no more a retribution, forced upon her from without, but a free and heroic self-sacrifice. This voluntary death thus raises her, in the midst of her insanity and sin, to a moral dignity which makes the final assurance from above that she is saved seem like a natural confirmation of our own conviction that her guilt had never touched the core of her being, — that at heart she was still good and innocent and pure. Nevertheless the deed, once committed, regardless of the motives which may have prompted it, is an inexorable fact which cannot be done away with, — an offense against the moral order of society, which society, as it is constituted, must avenge. And, through all the aberrations of her thoughts, this deep-rooted consciousness continually reasserts itself, that, even if she could flee from the arm of justice upon earth, there is no rest nor peace for her any more. In her childlike faith, however, she has a source of consolation which is closed to Faust; she trustfully surrenders herself to the judgment of God, imploring Him for help and guidance: —

The guilt an inexorable fact.

Margaret's prayer.

> "Thine am I, Father! rescue me!
> Ye angels, holy cohorts, guard me,
> Camp around and from evil ward me!
> Henry, I shudder to think of thee."

Mephisto, who has entered to remind them that the day is breaking, pronounces the stern verdict over her, that "she is judged," but an angel's voice from above gives assurance that "she is saved." In a commanding tone he bids Faust follow him; but as he vanishes, Margaret's voice is heard anxiously calling after him: "Henry! Henry!" And thus the first act of the tragedy closes. The unhappy girl, for whom her last day upon earth is just dawning, is still full of tender solicitude for the fate of the man who has wrought her ruin, but whom she cannot yet cease to love. And, as Vischer says, her anxious, compassionate call expands into the voice of

Faust disappears with Mephisto.

the vast invisible chorus, without, of countless sympathetic human hearts; it becomes a symbol of the many anxious queries with which we follow the guilt-laden man into the vast and important career which is about to open before him. The song of the angels at the close of the Second Part thus becomes doubly true, that "the love from above has ever followed him."

SECOND PART.

I.

IT is not my intention to go into any detailed exposition of the Second Part of "Faust," but merely to indicate, as far as I am able, in grand, comprehensive outlines, the development and organic coherence of the ideas which throb and glow beneath its bewildering mass of masks and obscure allegories.

Not a detailed analysis.

"Faust" is not a common drama; was probably never designed by its author for representation on the stage; it cannot, therefore, be judged by the common rules of dramatic art. Whenever I read it, it impresses me as if it had come, that very moment, fresh from its creator's hand. It will ever remain to me a revelation, inexhaustible, universal, offering new problems and ever new stores of large and deep truths to every new generation. It is in the deepest sense the epitome, the noblest result, of a grand and noble life. It is a mighty work, because its author was a mighty man. He was (I do not hesitate to say it) the most perfect example which history has to show of a man grown to the full stature of intellectual manhood. And this full-grown manhood, and the process by which it can be reached, he has typified and translated, as far as it was capable of translation, in Faust. It is vain, therefore, for him who can judge Goethe only by the petty social standards of his own narrow life to try to comprehend Faust. For it is Goethe's warm, tempestuous life-blood which flows in Faust's veins. A large

"Faust" cannot be judged by the common rules of dramatic art.

The processes of the author's intellectual growth symbolized in Faust.

man must be judged by large standards; you cannot measure a mountain with a yard-stick; you need a barometer. The fundamental thought and motive power of Goethe's life were, as Hettner[1] says, "the desire for a full and unhindered development and assertion of the whole, complete human nature, the ideal of a pure and free humanity on the basis of harmonious culture." And the possibilities of his being were grand and varied. Nature had endowed him royally. Hence the gigantic proportions of the drama, its Titanic strength, its vast range and scope, its large-hearted idealism, its wondrous universality, touching closely or remotely almost every conceivable condition of human life. The Germans are fond of calling it *ein Weltepos*, — a world-epos, — and the name is not inappropriate. The untamable Titanism of Goethe's youth (which he has commemorated in his "Prometheus" and "Götz von Berlichingen"), the gradual maturing process which taught him, after his return from Italy, to direct his energies toward more rational and attainable ends, his life-long struggle for a better and more complete manhood, the far-sighted wisdom of his grand old age, — all have entered as living, organic elements into "Faust." The drama is, therefore, with all its fragmentariness, a complete organic unity, just in the same degree that the author's own life was; to himself, however, as long as he was still alive, it never could appear as such, and his own verdict is, therefore, as natural as it is significant, that it must ever remain a fragment. Looking at the work from our present point of view, it seems eminently appropriate that Goethe should have completed it only a few months before the end of his life, and that it should have been published after his death. "Henceforth," he said to Eckermann, when the package containing the manuscript was sealed and laid away, "I must look upon my life purely as a gift; it is now really of little consequence what I do."

The gigantic proportions of "Faust."

"Faust" a complete organic unity.

[1] *Goethe und Schiller*. Von Hermann Hettner. Zweite Abtheilung, p. 8.

Some of the commentators have questioned the correctness of Goethe's statement that the idea of the poem, in the moment of its conception, assumed the general scope and outline of the finished work, as we now have it. To me, however, the statement seems by no means incredible. There is, as far as I have been able to judge, no single passage in Goethe's voluminous correspondence to disprove it. The poem, of course, underwent many changes with the changes of his artistic creed, and the details of the execution were subject to continual criticism; but it is hardly credible, as some have imagined, that the Second Part was a mere afterthought, an accidental appendix which Goethe attached to the living body of his first conception, for the sake of giving currency to certain artistic convictions which had been gradually taking possession of him since his return from Italy. Such a belief would necessitate a conclusion which surely no student of Goethe would seriously entertain: that he meant to give Faust over to the devil, to have all his noble aspirations end in his moral ruin. At the time when the Prologue in Heaven was written (1797) he could not have been in doubt as to what his hero's final fate would be. Faust, as we have seen, was intended as the type of the human race, and surely Goethe could never have wished to foreshadow that the whole race was to end in moral bankruptcy. The Lord had, in the scene alluded to, expressed his belief that Faust, strengthened and purified by the overcoming of the temptations which Mephistopheles places in his way, would rise to a higher spiritual state. Mephisto would thus indirectly become the means of doing him good; "he must create as devil;" but to have him win his wager with the Lord would have indicated a degree of pessimism, on the author's part, worthy of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, and wholly out of keeping with the spirit of Goethe's philosophy. Moreover, — and this is more directly for our present

A statement of Goethe questioned.

The Second Part not an afterthought.

purpose, — the whole plot and tendency of the First Part would in that case have been very differently designed; Mephisto's character would not have been drawn with such fatal limitations, and his mental inferiority to Faust would not, in many scenes, have been so glaringly apparent.

The Second Part as essential as the First.

The Second Part, then, we may safely assume, is as essential a part of the complete design as the first; without it the ending of the First Part, which consigns Faust to the power of his enemy, would have been misleading and at variance with the broad, liberal spirit of Goethe's life. We may take exception to many things in it; we may criticise a number of details as more or less consistent with the general tendency of the work, but the idea itself is so vast in its scope, so infinite in its suggestiveness, that it could have sprung only from a grand and wondrously developed intellect. I cannot help thinking that even what we may conceive to be mistakes has an intrinsic worth, and should be treated with due reverence; for there is nothing in Goethe's life which is not significant and valuable.

Emerson on the Second Part of "Faust."

I find a passage in Emerson's "Representative Men" which has a direct bearing upon the relation of the First to the Second Part of "Faust:" "In each house, in the heart of each maiden and each boy, in the soul of the soaring saint, this chasm is found, between the largest promise of ideal power and the shabby experience. The expansive truth comes to our succor. Man helps himself by larger generalizations." Faust had hoped to bridge this chasm, and he is still hoping. He yearned for the moment to which he could say, "Stay, thou art so fair;" the moment when the ideal aspiration and the actual experience should be absolutely at one. He had wished to rise above the isolation of his own individuality, or, as Vischer puts it, to expand his individual *ego* into the universal *ego*. It is, after all, the old problem of an infinite

soul chafing against the prison-bars of its finite body. Between these two opposing forces no reconciliation is possible; the lame, unaspiring resignation of commonplace humanity is not a reconciliation, but merely a compromise. Faust's fiery spirit was unable to acquiesce *a priori* in the experience of the past, which teaches that it is the part of a wise man to accept this compromise and to make the best of it; to him this was an evasion of the problem, not a solution. He must himself drain the cup of human misery to the dregs ere he can know how it tastes; in a stormy, passionate career he must repeat in himself the bitter experience of the race, and learn its lesson anew. The lesson, however, still remains the same; the moment of absolute bliss is still as remote as ever, and only the pain and the regret survive. Nevertheless Faust is now wiser than he was; he is in the depth of his being convinced that between the finite and the infinite no relation can exist, no proportion; that the finite, even by an unending development, cannot grow into the infinite; that they are separated by discreet degrees. Strong as he is, however, this does not discourage him; he is forced to accept the compromise, but he is determined to wrest from it even the last shadow of advantage that is yet within his reach. He has learned to limit his aspirations to the attainable, but he is resolved to test by an energetic application of all his powers what it is that is really attainable to man. With this resolution he now enters upon the larger life into which, according to the contract, Mephistopheles was to introduce him: —

The lesson taught by the First Part.

"What is attainable unto man."

"The little world and then the great we 'll see."

II.

THE opening scene represents Faust reclining on the flowery turf, restlessly tossing to and fro and vainly endeavoring to sleep. Many years have elapsed since the death of Margaret, and the healing influences of time and nature, externally symbolized by a throng of airy elves hovering about him and lulling him to sleep by their song, have obliterated, not the memory of his guilt, but the vain, paralyzing remorse which has haunted him so long. A beautiful landscape surrounds him; the fresh, invigorating air of the early morning blows into his face. With the coming of the dawn the elves vanish; Faust rouses himself, and thus hails the rising day: —

Faust reposing on the flowery turf.

"Life's pulses now with fresher force awaken
To greet the mild ethereal twilight o'er me;
This night, thou, Earth! hast also stood unshaken,
And now thou breathest new-refreshed before me,
And now beginnest, all thy gladness granting,
A vigorous resolution to restore me,
To seek that highest life for which I'm panting."

It is a new atmosphere we are breathing here. Instead of surrendering to futile and inactive regret for what is irrevocably and unalterably done, Faust is animated by a manly resolution to strive for the highest and noblest things of existence. He feels that the only effective expiation of his sin is a devotion to better and worthier aims in the future, — not emotional regret, but a repentance in deed: —

Faust is animated by a manly resolution.

"When the crowd sways, unbelieving,
Show the daring will that warms!
He is crowned with all achieving,
Who perceives and then performs."

The disastrous experience of the First Part has shown him that happiness is not to be found in obedience to the selfish impulses of passion. Where, then, is happiness to be found? The nearest conclusion, the next "larger generalization," would suggest that in obedience to one's nobler impulses, in the harmonious development of all the powers with which Nature has endowed one, lies a sure promise of happiness. This, too, is Faust's conclusion. Like Goethe himself, he begins his new and larger career with the pursuit of culture. He has made a long stride forward; he is no more the slave of his sensual nature, but its master. He is still a eudemonist, but of a much nobler type than he was before. His aim, though not the highest of which a man is capable, is still a good and worthy one; it corresponds strictly to the stage of development which he has now reached; but as is frequently, or, I might say, almost invariably, the case with a man who conscientiously labors for his own improvement, he gradually outgrows himself, his mixed motive becomes purified, and his eudemonism gives place to an exalted, unselfish enthusiasm for the welfare of his race.

Resolved to develop all the powers with which he has been endowed.

Faust still a eudemonist.

Faust, yearning for a wider sphere of beneficent activity, is now conducted by Mephistopheles to the imperial court. The wildest confusion reigns everywhere in the empire. The young emperor who has just succeeded to the throne cares only for his own pleasures, and has no taste for the serious affairs of state. The treasurer, the chancellor, the general of the army, and all the other high functionaries of the empire appear and describe the hopeless condition of their respective departments: the treasury is empty; the hired army, which is yet unpaid, is on the point of desertion; the courts are corrupt; plunder, rapine, and all forms of lawlessness are rampant, — in fine, the whole empire is in a state of complete dissolution. Here Mephisto is in his

The imperial court.

The distressing state of the empire.

element, and he skillfully avails himself of the general confusion to make his influence felt. The court fool has just been carried away in an unconscious condition, and he has dexterously slipped into his vacant place. The sovereign has been listening with ill-disguised impatience to the long-winded complaints of his ministers, and now turns half jocosely to the new fool, asking if he too has not something to complain of. Mephisto answers gracefully that in the emperor's serene presence he can feel nothing but happiness, and in the conversation which follows takes occasion to propose a remedy for the financial difficulty. He then unfolds a very ingenious plan of issuing paper money, offering as security all the hidden treasures which, according to mediæval belief, lay buried in the earth. This plan is joyously adopted; the notes are at first eagerly accepted, and a brief, delusive prosperity ensues, which later on (as the fourth act shows) plunges the realm into renewed anarchy and embarrassment.

Mephisto as clown.

Elated and delighted at the apparent return of prosperity, the emperor arranges a carnival masquerade, intended as an allegorical representation of society and government. Faust, who has hitherto remained inactive, here takes the part of Plutus, symbolizing the real prosperity, founded on order and the gradual development of the resources of the land, in opposition to the deceptive show of wealth produced by Mephisto's disastrous device. He conjures the destructive element of fire, which comes near consuming the emperor and his attendants. Goethe probably intended hereby to indicate that Faust with true statesmanlike insight foresees the inevitable result of the financial scheme, the sudden success of which has dazzled the light-headed monarch and his counselors.

The Carnival Masquerade.

Faust's conjuration of the flame, and its significance.

The emperor, having seen a proof of Faust's power, now demands of him that he shall conjure up the shades of Paris and Helen of Troy. Faust communicates to Mephisto

the emperor's command, and requests his aid, but the devil is forced to confess that he has no power over the pagan phantoms. As the spirit of negation he has no sympathy with the living, ideal beauty of the ancient Greek civilization; among the grotesque, deformed phantasms of the Walpurgis Night, the monstrous creations of Northern imagination, he is at home, but his sway does not extend to the realm of real beauty. In order to summon up these spirits, he says, Faust must himself descend to "The Mothers" (the secret creative forces of Nature); there only he will gain the charm by which he may bring Paris and Helen to the light of day. In other words, the ideal sense of beauty is not a thing that can be suddenly acquired; it is only to be gained by an intimate knowledge of Nature's own mysterious laws. Beauty is order, spontaneous conformity to law. Faust must himself, without Mephisto's guidance, penetrate to Nature's heart, and by actual contemplation of the working of her vast creative economy gain that sense of beauty by which he is to summon its external symbols. Obedient to this advice, he descends into the region where "The Mothers" dwell, and returns, laurel-crowned, followed by the immortal shades. But, intoxicated with delight and quite beside himself at the sight of the wondrous harmony of Helen's form, he rushes forward to clasp her in his embrace. A terrible explosion follows, the spirits vanish in vapor, and Faust falls unconscious to the earth. A violation of law, a sudden burst of passion, will never lead to the attainment of the ideal; it can be reached only by a gradual, orderly growth, by a harmonious development of all the powers of the intellect and of the heart.

The shades of Paris and Helen.

"The Mothers."

Faust embraces Helen.

It must be remembered that this descent to "The Mothers," as well as the other symbolic acts which are attributed to Faust, occupies a much longer time than we are led to infer from reading the alle-

The drawbacks of the allegorical method.

gory or seeing it performed upon the stage. Long processes of intellectual and spiritual growth could not be dramatically represented. The only way in which the poet, while still adhering to the dramatic form, could make them intelligible to the reader, was by resorting to allegory, by condensing the labor and experience of many years into one brief, symbolic act. And still, this method was rather a makeshift than a real solution of the problem, and Goethe was himself, as his correspondence with Schiller shows, fully sensible of the disadvantages which it involved. In the first place, it is difficult to make the blood circulate freely and warmly in a figure which stands there merely to represent a cold and bloodless idea. Plain old John Bunyan came much nearer achieving this than the stately and classical Goethe. With the latter the allegory is seldom anything more than a mask, through which the author's voice is distinctly audible. Thus Helen, though we are told that she represents the ideal of beauty, and her voice trips most gracefully through the sweet, sonorous classical trimeters, never for a moment rouses our human sympathy and interest. Faust's sudden ardor at the sight of her seems a little enigmatical. As Mr. Lowell says, she possesses every charm of womanhood except that of being alive. The Graces, the Sirens, Homunculus, Euphorion, and a multitude of other figures that appear only to vanish again when they have served the author's didactic purpose, also possess this kind of incorporeal beauty; they have no flavor of earth about them, and it is a hard task for the imagination to clothe them in any tangible and intelligible form. Even Mephistopheles loses something of his satanic vitality in the Second Part, undergoes allegorical transformations, and finally degenerates into a mere personification of cold, unsympathetic reason. Goethe seems, consciously or not, to have assigned him a rôle corresponding to that of the chorus in the Greek tragedies, which

Goethe's allegories bloodless masks.

The rôle of Mephisto in the Second Part.

accompanies the action, as it were, with marginal comments, in which the emotions of the ideal spectator are reflected; in the choral utterances of Mephistopheles, however, it is Goethe's own views, and not those of the reader, which are echoed.

Schiller, in a letter to his friend, referring to "Faust," makes the remark that he can hardly conceive of a frame large enough to hold his vast purpose together. When Goethe, although admitting the difficulty, nevertheless adopted the dramatic form, he reserved for himself the right of interpreting the term in his own liberal way. He had always manifested considerable disrespect for the traditional requirements of the drama; what was of primary importance to him was to find a mould in which he could cast the multitudinous fabric of his thought so as to give it coherence and a certain artistic unity. A didactic allegorical drama, or a dramatized epic, as Kreyssig calls it, was the result. For the Aristotelian unity of action, Goethe substitutes a unity of purpose; the successive scenes of the Second Part have no other logical connection than that which the didactic purpose imparts to them. There is no personal interest transferable from scene to scene, first because the characters are introduced and again vanish in what to the uninitiated reader appears a very arbitrary manner, and secondly because their fates are governed by laws quite different from those which affect the lives of ordinary mortals. Their obscure, oracular utterances require elaborate explanations, and this continual reference to the commentary soon spoils all illusion and makes the first reading of the work a task rather than a pleasure. And for all that, when the clew is once found, when the whole grand design begins to dawn upon the mind, and the fantastic complexity of detail to subordinate itself to the leading motive, how richly our labor is rewarded! What beauty of thought, what a wealth of wisdom, is hidden in

No frame large enough to hold the vast design together.

No unity of action, but a unity of purpose.

these enigmatical allegories![1] These verses, cast in the stateliest classical metres, exhale the purest breath of humanistic culture.

Emerson once more.

"The Second Part of 'Faust,'" says Emerson, "is a philosophy of literature set in poetry; the work of one who found himself master of histories, mythologies, philosophies, sciences, and national literatures; and every one of these kingdoms assuming a certain aerial and poetic character by reason of the multitude. One looks at a king with reverence; but if one should chance to be at a congress of kings, the eye would take liberties with the peculiarities of each. These are not wild, miraculous songs, but elaborate forms to which the poet has confided the results of eighty years of observation. This reflective and critical wisdom makes the poem more truly the flower of this time. It dates itself. Still he is a poet — poet of a prouder laurel than any contemporary — and, under this plague of microscopes (for he seems to see out of every pore of his skin), strikes the harp with a hero's strength and grace."

[1] Mr. Lowell in his *Among My Books* (vol. ii., p. 177) makes a remark about Spenser's allegories which applies equally well to those of Goethe: "He makes one think always of Venice; for not only is his style Venetian, but as the gallery there is housed in the shell of an abandoned convent, so is his in that of a deserted allegory."

III.

HAVING once seen Helen, Faust can no more tarry at the imperial court. Its masquerades, feasts, and idle pleasures pall upon his sense. His life has henceforth a definite aim, no longer merely a general desire for culture, but also a distinct consciousness of where the highest culture is to be found. From this moment dates the beginning of his intellectual regeneration. He resolves to devote all his energies to the one purpose of gaining possession of Helen: another symbolic allusion, the meaning of which is obvious. Since his Italian journey, when the true significance of the ancient Greek civilization was revealed to him, Goethe's own powers had been directed toward this same object — the incorporation into his life and writings of the ideal Greek spirit. Faust is now to tread the same path which his master had trodden. With this in view he returns, accompanied by Mephistopheles, to his old abandoned study, where his former famulus, Wagner, has during his absence been delving deeply into occult sciences, and has acquired a great reputation. Faust has now, on the road of experience, learned to value science and knowledge, "the highest strength that abides in man;" by his desire to reach the goal, typified by Helen, he has been forced to return to the slow and patient methods which once, in the Titanic ardor of his soul, he had rejected.

Second Act.

Faust leaves the court, and resolves to win Helen.

Goethe's Hellenism.

Faust's return to his old study.

While he lies stretched out in sleep upon his ancestral bed, in the background of the study, Mephisto takes down the old, fur-brimmed professorial gown from the wall, where

it has been hanging undisturbed these many years. He puts it on, while the moths fly about his ears, seats himself in Faust's chair, and pulls the bell, which startles all the slumbering echoes in the long deserted galleries. Wagner's famulus (for Wagner is now himself a professor) enters, trembling with fear, to see who has caused this unusual disturbance. To Mephisto's request to see his master, he responds that the professor, who is engaged in some very important work, has for months shut himself up in his laboratory, and does not receive any one. Half conciliated, however, by Mephisto's exaggerated praise of his master's zeal and learning, he goes off shaking his head, but without any definite promise, to announce the visitor.

Mephisto and Wagner's famulus.

While the devil is awaiting the return of the famulus, the student to whom, years ago, he had given such precious advice comes storming along the corridors to call upon his old professor. The young man, however, is no longer the diffident freshman whose acquaintance we made in the First Part, but an arrogant, self-confident baccalaureus, who scoffs at science, experience, and morals, and tells the supposed professor to his face that he is a conceited old fool, who has really no longer any right to existence: —

The Baccalaureus.

Mephisto's conversation with the Baccalaureus.

> "Experience! mist and froth alone!
> Nor with the mind at all coequal:
> Confess what one has always known
> Is not worth knowing in the sequel.
>
> MEPHISTOPHELES (*after a pause*).
>
> It 's long seemed so to me. I was a fool:
> My shallowness I now must ridicule.
>
> BACCALAUREUS.
>
> I 'm glad of that! I hear some reason yet —
> The first old man of sense I ever met.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I sought for hidden treasures, grand and golden,
And hideous coals and ashes were my share.

BACCALAUREUS.

Confess that now your skull, though bald and olden,
Is worth no more than is yon empty, there!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Know'st thou, my friend, how rude thou art to me?

BACCALAUREUS.

One lies, in German, would one courteous be."

It is easy to perceive that Mephisto is humoring the impudent young fellow, leading him on to ever greater paradoxes, and having his private laugh at him all the while. He rejoices, no doubt, to see what an apt pupil he has found in him, and what an ample harvest his teachings have brought forth.

Satire on Fichte's philosophy.

The whole scene is evidently intended as a satire on Fichte's transcendental philosophy, which had lately flourished at the University of Jena, giving rise to violent partisanship among the students, and occasioning many complications in the faculty.

Wagner's laboratory.

After the departure of the student, Mephisto makes his way to the laboratory, where he finds Wagner among his retorts and kettles, engaged in his fantastic alchemistic researches. Convinced of the omnipotence of science, he believes (like his namesake the philosopher, Johann Jacob Wagner, of Würzburg) that "organic chemistry must in time succeed in producing organic bodies and in fashioning men by crystallization."[1] He is at this moment gazing in breathless suspense at the retort, where his mixture is seething, evaporating, and assuming strange forms. Finally, a small human being, Homunculus, appears, who, we are led to infer, no doubt

Homunculus.

[1] Düntzer: *Erläuterungen zu den deutschen Klassikern*, pp. 20, 21 Bändchen 64, 65. Leipzig.

owes his origin as much to Mephisto's art as to Wagner's concoctions. This wayward sprite now conducts Faust and Mephisto (the latter very much against his will) to the Classical Walpurgis Night, where Faust's further progress toward the ideal of Greek beauty is symbolically represented.

The signification of Homunculus.

What Homunculus is really meant to symbolize has never been satisfactorily explained. Goethe's answer to Eckermann's inquiry regarding this singular creation by no means solves the problem. Düntzer calls it the personification of Faust's restless aspiration toward ideal beauty, and explains the disappearance of Homunculus at the Classical Walpurgis Night as the natural extinction of the aspiration when its object has been attained. Whether this be correct or not, it is a significant fact that it is the result of Wagner's laborious researches which serves Faust as a guide to the region whither all his desires tend. Instead of resuming for another long period of years his independent investigations into the mysteries of Nature, he is now in a condition to profit by the lore accumulated by the narrow-sighted, unimaginative specialists who have labored with pedantic conscientiousness before him, without suspecting the high uses to which the results of their own researches might be applied. Like the stone-carver on some mediæval cathedral, whose mechanical skill fashions the hard granite into a fern-leaf, or gargoyle, or griffin, essential to the harmony of the grand design, these obscure scholars patiently dig out minute facts of Nature, quite unconscious of the grandeur of the structure which they are slowly erecting. "A Faust will always reap the fruit of what a Wagner has sown."[1] A large-sighted, imaginative genius will by some daring synthesis arrange into a grand organic unity the chaos of facts which his obscurer predecessors have placed at his disposal.

"A Faust will always reap the fruit of what a Wagner has sown."

[1] Kreyssig: *Vorlesungen über Goethe's Faust*, p. 202. Berlin, 1866.

Goethe had in his own life frequent occasion to verify this experience of Faust's: and the Wagners of his day, partly because they were unable to comprehend the structure of so large a mind, partly from a sense of proprietorship in the facts which their labor had evolved, resented the use to which he put them, no less than the original Wagner resented the flight of his Homunculus with Faust to the Classical Walpurgis Night.

Mephisto loses his power over Faust.

In the mean while Mephistopheles has gradually been losing all his power over Faust, with whose present aspirations he has no patience. He follows him to Greece merely because the contract obliges him to serve him, but utters his protest at every step, — a symbolic indication that evil, in the sense in which we have taken it, as a thing to be conquered and subdued, by occasioning this continued effort for its subjugation rouses the best energies of a man, and thus furthers his spiritual development.

Mephisto reluctantly follows Faust to Greece,

Mephisto has declared himself emphatically against participating in this pagan masquerade, but finds, to his surprise, at the Classical Walpurgis Night congenial spirits, in whose company he feels almost as much at home as among his own Northern witches. The Greek mythology, too, had its monstrous creations, — Griffins, Sphinxes, Sirens, Lamiæ, etc., and to these he attaches himself, leaving Faust to follow his own inclinations.

and finds congenial spirits there.

The allegory now gathers a wider meaning, being really a history of the evolution of Greek art. Having reached the Pharsalian Fields, the scene of the great battle in which Pompey was defeated by Cæsar, the airy travelers see the Thessalian witch Erichto fleeing at their approach. At the sight of Greece Faust's yearning for Helen reawakens with redoubled force; he feels as if he were treading on sacred soil, and with calm and cheerful resolution he starts in

A history of the evolution of Greek art.

Erichto.

quest of the vision which fills his soul. The passionate ferment of his early Gothic manhood is past; the serene consciousness of a lofty purpose has produced in him a beautiful equilibrium of his physical and mental powers, manifesting itself in a steady, orderly progress toward ever nobler spheres of being.

His attention is first called to the cruder creations of Greek mythology, indicating the early connection of Greece with the Orient. The representative of these is the Griffin, a fantastic animal form, without trace of human beauty. Then comes the Egyptian Sphinx, having the head of a virgin and the body of a beast. The next step onward is symbolized by the Sirens, the first native creation of the Greek mind, in whose alluring song the dormant yearning for the beautiful is dimly expressed; but the form is yet monstrous, half man, half beast. So also in the Centaur, Chiron, who is the first to give Faust a satisfactory answer to his inquiry regarding Helen; the evolutionary process is clearly indicated, for the combination is here no longer ugly, and the human attributes prevail over those of the animal. He accompanies Faust to Peneus, where the river-god and the nymphs, graceful and poetic personifications of Nature, invite him to bathe in the cool waters of their stream. Now the stage of pure humanity is reached. Here the Centaur pours into Faust's enraptured ear the tale of Helen, whom once he bore on his back, spurring his listener on to renewed energy and stronger endeavor. He then carries him to the wise Sibyl, Manto, who recognizes Faust's aim as a noble and grand one, and shows him in her temple a descent to Hades, where, by the aid of Persephone, the goddess of the under world, he may succeed in approaching Helen. Hidden from the light of day, completely absorbed in the pursuit of his ideal, Faust now listens to the mighty heart-throbs of the earth, and her

The Griffin.

The Centaur, Chiron.

The river-god, Peneus.

The Sibyl, Manto.

Faust's descent to Hades.

vital forces pulsate in strong currents through his being. Thus by the deepest intimacy with Nature's great hidden life does he arrive at a complete comprehension of the beautiful. It is the broad and profound creed of the master himself which meets us here; it is the processes of his own artistic regeneration which he depicts to us, and whatever we may think of the details of the allegory, the vastness of its scope and the depth of its meaning must ever command our reverence.

Faust now vanishes for the rest of the act. His communion with Persephone (the grand mysteries of Nature's secret economy) is not to be divulged. Isis is not to be unveiled to the gaze of the vulgar.

Neptunism and Vulcanism.

The symbolic controversy between the Neptunists and the Vulcanists in the following scenes has no direct influence upon Faust's fate, and may, therefore, safely be omitted. Goethe here seizes the opportunity to avenge himself, in a harmless way, upon his scientific opponents, and calls upon Nereids, Tritons, the philosopher Thales, and other mythological and historical persons to sustain his side of the argument. As a firm believer in law and orderly development, Goethe was passionately opposed to those naturalists who, with his friend Alexander von Humboldt, assigned to fire, earthquakes, and volcanoes the principal agency in fashioning the surface of the earth. So far from stultifying himself, however, against the evidence of well-proven facts, he was ready to admit that these violent and, as it appeared to him, disorderly phenomena had a secondary, subordinate, or incidental effect upon the total result; but the calm and beautiful regularity with which the water silently labors to fashion the rock and the air to decompose it into a foundation for vegetable life was to him in deeper conformity with the temper of Nature, as he knew and loved her, and he could not bear the thought of having her prove unfaithful to her best and truest instincts. An occa-

Goethe's attitude toward Vulcanism.

sional outbreak of passion in her youth he could readily excuse, but a state of uninterrupted excitability he found absolutely unpardonable. To him this was a question of the most vital importance, and he was determined to force it upon the attention of posterity, even if the work which had ever lain nearest to his heart were to suffer by it. "About æsthetic matters," he once said to Chancellor von Müller,[1] "every one may think and feel very much as he pleases, but in natural science the false and the absurd are positively unendurable." "This friend," he remarked on the same occasion, referring to Alexander von Humboldt, "has in fact never had any higher method; only much common sense, much zeal and persistence." And a few months later, when his wrath was somewhat allayed, he jocosely proposed to give his friend, Madame Szymanowska, the following letter of introduction to the famous Vulcanist: "As you belong to those naturalists who believe everything to have been produced by volcanic action, I hereby send you a female volcano, who will completely singe and burn up whatever there may still be left."

Æsthetics and natural science.

Somehow one cannot help liking him better for this stanch partisanship, and even his apparent injustice to Von Humboldt gives us a glimpse of what is, at bottom, a very lovable trait. Nature had, through a long series of years, intrusted her most beautiful secrets to him; he was in her confidence, and could gaze into her bosom "as into the bosom of a friend." What wonder, then, that he should promptly resent any attempt to misinterpret her and disturb the grand harmony of her methods?

Goethe's stanch partisanship.

[1] *Goethe's Unterhaltungen mit Kanzler Fr. v. Müller*, p. 56, Stuttgart, 1870.

IV.

THE third act of the Second Part was published separately in 1827, under the title of "Helen: a Classico-Romantic Phantasmagoria," and was not originally intended for insertion in "Faust." In spite of Goethe's belief, as expressed in a letter to his friend Zelter, that all the acts of the Second Part are now joined together so as to leave no gaps, the seams by which the "Helen" is attached to the rest are nevertheless still glaringly visible, and the whole work would no doubt appear as complete and better proportioned if this late excrescence had in the end been detached or permitted to continue its independent existence. Third Act.

The first scene opens with Helen's return from Troy. Menelaus has sent her and a number of captive Trojan maidens home in advance of his army. He has bidden her to complete the preparations for a grand sacrificial feast to be celebrated on his arrival with the Greek heroes in Sparta; but he has neglected to inform her where the beasts of sacrifice are to be procured. This fills her with a dim foreboding. She remembers Iphigenia's fate, and she fears that her husband, who during the voyage had scarcely looked at her or spoken any word of comfort, is brooding on some evil deed. Goethe, utilizing some earlier myth, and adding much of his own invention, represents Helen, not as the unfaithful wife, but as an innocent victim of Fate. As appears from her dialogue with the chorus of captive maidens, she has been forcibly carried away by Paris during the absence of Menelaus at Cythere; the latter, however, evidently believes Helen's return from Troy.

her guilty, and has resolved to avenge upon her all the woe she has involuntarily brought upon the Greeks.

Helen flees at the sight of Mephisto.

Helen enters the palace, but flees horror-stricken at the sight of Mephistopheles, who, in accordance with his negative bent, had during the Classical Walpurgis Night assumed the form of one of the Phorkyads, an ideal of female ugliness. Now follows a quarrel in the antique measure of strophe, antistrophe, and epod, in which Mephisto reviles the maidens, and is in turn reviled by them. Then he attacks Helen, rehearsing all her misdeeds, and finally reveals to her her husband's intention of sacrificing her and her maidens to the gods, as an expiation of her guilt. She, seeing in this the confirmation of her own forebodings, believes him, and with that absolute abandonment to the emotion of the moment so characteristic of the ancient Greek, laments her evil fate. Mephisto, however, or rather Phorkyas, whose mission it is to bring Helen to Faust, now changes his tactics, praises her heavenly beauty, and strives to gain her confidence. An heroic race of men, he says, emigrated from the Cimmerian night of the North, has founded a kingdom in the mountains of Arcadia; their chief, whom he describes as "cheerful, brave and bold, and nobly-formed, — a prudent man and wise, as few among the Greeks," is ready to offer her a refuge from her enraged husband; thither she must flee with her maidens, and he will conduct her to freedom and safety. Helen, though still distrustful and anxious, is alarmed at the distant sound of trumpets, announcing the approach of the Greeks, and in her sore need has no choice but to accept the guidance of the Northern demon. With the chorus she hastens northward, and arrives at Faust's Arcadian castle. She is conscious that the glory of the antique world is past, and that a new future is dawning before her among a new people. The Greek ideal of beauty, the noblest result of the ancient civilization, does not perish with the downfall

Mephisto induces Helen to flee toward the north.

of the Greek states as political organizations. The imperishable monuments which they left behind them, in marble, in prose, and in song, passed into the possession of other nations, when they themselves could no longer guard them nor comprehend their grandeur. The serene, plastic dignity of their sculptured gods and heroes, the wondrously clear and withal imaginative harmony of their temples, and the rhythmic grace and splendor of their melodious tongue speak no provincial dialect, but a divine language which all civilized mankind will in time understand. In the mean while, then, Helen, the total embodiment of the highest achievements of their race in the realm of beauty, has fled for refuge to Faust, has passed into the keeping of the Gothic nations, who have learned to know her worth and will ever cherish her reverently and tenderly.

The significance of Helen's flight to Faust.

The legacy of the Greeks passes into the keeping of the Gothic nations.

Faust, in the festal attire of a mediæval German knight, greets her on her arrival with a joyously solemn welcome. At his side stands Lynceus, the warder of the castle, bound with chains, and condemned to death, because, dazzled by Helen's splendor, he had forgotten his duty and neglected to announce her approach. Faust declares his warder's guilt before her, and places his life in her hand; while she, unaccustomed as she is to such courtesy and reverence, listens wonderingly to the captive's plea, and readily forgives him. Here and in the following scenes the position of woman among the Germanic nations in the Middle Ages (*Frauendienst*) is drawn in sharp contrast to her position among the ancient Greeks. In the enthusiastic homage of Lynceus, as well as of Faust himself, is represented the romantic idea of love (*Minne*), differing so widely from the cheerful, unreflecting sensuality of the Greeks. Helen is at first at a loss to understand this homage, and is almost painfully impressed by it. The infatuation of Lynceus, so

Faust's meeting with Helen.

The position of woman among the Greeks and with the Germans.

far from delighting her, fills her with pity both for herself and for him. She regrets that Fate has endowed her with such an irresistible charm that even demigods and heroes forget all else in her presence, and bring ruin upon themselves and others in order to possess her. Seated upon the throne which has been prepared for her, she now beckons Faust to her side, and offers him her hand, while the chorus comment upon the act from their own sensual point of view, thus unconsciously emphasizing the contrast between the antique and the romantic idea of love. Helen, on the other hand, feels her bosom enkindled with a strange, blissful sensation; her heart throbs responsive to the loving ardor of Faust: —

Helen's betrothal to Faust.

> "I feel so far away, and yet so near;
> I am so fain to say, 'Here am I! here.'
>
> FAUST.
>
> I scarcely breathe; I tremble; speech is dead:
> It is a dream, and day and place have fled.
>
> HELEN.
>
> I seem as life were done, and yet so new,
> Blest thus with thee, — to thee, the Unknown, true! " .

It is significant that this union of the romantic with the Greek ideal takes place in Arcadia, accordingly on Greek soil. Romantic art, if I read the poet aright, must return to the healthy creed of Homer and Æschylus, must learn to estimate Nature at her true worth, if it is ever to rise to the highest achievements of which the Gothic mind is capable. We must learn the difference between modesty and prudery, learn to know that the human body is beautiful, and that spirituality is well compatible with health and strength and a full development of our physical nature. Not until our literary as well as our plastic artists have relearned this ancient lesson will they achieve anything that is at all comparable with the master-works of the ancient world. The intensity and

What we are to learn from the Greeks.

depth of spiritual insight, in which lies the strength of the Goth, must be wedded to the plastic sense and healthy appreciation of sensuous Nature peculiar to the Greek, and from this union a new art will be born which shall combine the noblest characteristics of the two representative races of the world.

Euphorion.

It is the result of this symbolic union which is typified in Euphorion, the winged son of Faust and Helen. He is the genius of modern poetry in its most finished form, romantic passion, clad in the perfection of classical beauty. With the lyre in his hand, he rises singing from the earth, and the parents, full of anxiety and delight, listen to the strange, full-sounding, heart-moving tones of his voice. It is well known that Goethe intended in this willful and wanton sprite to commemorate the life of Byron, the poet whom, among moderns, he admired and valued above all others. In Euphorion's mad pursuit of the maidens of the chorus, whose hearts are immediately drawn towards him, he recalls the passionate excesses of Byron's youth. As he climbs upward from crag to crag among the wild mountains of Arcadia, his song gathers an ever wilder intensity and fervor, but his form does not appear smaller to the eyes of those who anxiously watch his flight from below. As at length he reaches the highest peak of the Peloponnesus, whence he can survey the whole fair land of Greece, a holy ardor for human freedom inspires him, and he sings of war and victory and the hero's glory: —

Byron's career symbolized in Euphorion.

"No, 't is no child which thou beholdest, —
A youth in arms, with haughty brow!
And with the strongest, freest, boldest,
His soul is pledged in manly vow.
I go!
For lo!
The path to glory opens now.

. . . . . .

And hear ye thunders on the ocean?
From land the thunder-echoes call?

In dust and foam, with fierce commotion,
The armies shock, the heroes fall!
The command
Is, sword in hand,
To die: 't is certain once for all."

Euphorion's death.

He throws himself into the air; his garments bear him up for a moment, but soon "a beautiful youth falls at the feet of the parents."

Byron's enthusiasm for Greek liberty, his active coöperation with the chiefs of the insurrection, and his sudden death at Missolonghi are here unmistakably indicated. But, as if to make assurance doubly sure, Goethe adds in a parenthetical stage direction: "We imagine that in the dead body we perceive a well-known form; yet the corporeal part vanishes at once, and the aureole rises like a comet towards heaven."

Helen returns to Hades.

Helen follows her child into the realm of shades; Faust, who strives to hold her fast in his embrace, sees her vanish in his arms. Only her veil and her garment are left to him. But, as Phorkyas (Mephisto) declares, these are in themselves priceless; to these he must yet cling: —

"Hold fast what now alone remains to thee!
The garment let not go! Already twitch
The demons at its skirts, and they would fain
To the nether regions drag it! Hold it fast!
It is no more the goddess thou hast lost,
But godlike is it. For thy use employ
The grand and priceless gift, and soar aloft!
'T will bear thee swift from all things mean and low
To ether high, so long thou canst endure."

The meaning of Helen's garment.

The meaning of this is not to be mistaken. The real animating spirit of the Greek civilization, which Faust (like Goethe himself) had reconquered, could not abide with him long. Only in the most inspired moments of his creative period, when, "Actæon-like, he gazed on Nature's naked loveliness," could he fathom its full meaning; but the half-transparent veil,

through which the spirit shimmered forth, and the garment which, while concealing, still revealed its beauty, *i. e.*, the noble classical form which is bequeathed to us in the sculpture and literature of the Greeks, these we may still retain and adapt to new uses, breathing into them the new spirit of the modern, Germanic civilization. With what impressive earnestness does not Goethe here urge upon us to guard and to cherish the great legacy of his own life, — the noble classical form! Even though it be not the goddess herself, he says, it is yet god-like. The constant study of it, the unremitting effort to possess it, had lifted him above the meanness and misery of the petty, reactionary period in which he lived, and it will lift into a noble sphere of being every one who, after him, will worthily strive for its possession.

The classical form.

I doubt if Goethe here intended to recommend, as Winckelmann did, an absolute imitation of the antique form. As the living result of a civilization that is irrevocably past it can never be livingly reproduced; or, if reproduced, would resemble its model as a minutely copied wax flower resembles the living flower in the field. But wax flowers are products of skill, not of art. The garment of Helen, which Goethe reconquered, has still something of her spirit, which, like a haunting fragrance, clings to it and envelops it; it tells, like any precious relic of the past, a beautiful tale of the soul which once dwelt in it. And only in so far as we are able to comprehend this fleeting breath of the spirit, are we safe in trying to reproduce and reanimate the form.

Doubtful whether Goethe intended to recommend absolute imitation of the Greeks.

V.

FAUST had sought refuge from the dominion of his passions and from the sorrows which his guilt had brought upon him, in a deep and loving absorption in Nature; reposing upon Nature's bosom, he had found healing for his wounds, and by her aid the great realm of beauty had been opened to him. But his æsthetic delights had yielded him no enduring satisfaction; they had had no end and aim outside of himself, and the ideal in the possession of which he had hoped to find absolute happiness had fled from him. To the active man, in the strength of his manhood, the pursuit of the beautiful is not a final goal, but an educational process, a transient state, which naturally points beyond itself. To utilize the result of his æsthetic education, Faust must again be transferred to his native soil, where the wider sphere of activity for which he is now hungering is to unfold itself before him. This is strikingly symbolized by the fact that Helen's garment wraps itself about him like a cloud, and carries him back to his German fatherland. He feels himself as a member of the great human family, and yearns to apply the large volume of experience which his past has gained him, in practical pursuits for the amelioration of the lot of his suffering fellow-men. As once he had risen from the sensual into the æsthetic world, he now rises from the latter into the world of moral feeling and action. His mixed motives have become purified; he begins to be conscious of his moral worth and responsibility as a human being, — another great

Fourth Act.

The beautiful not a final goal.

Faust returns to his fatherland.

Faust enters upon the moral plane of being.

stride onward in the path of his spiritual and intellectual regeneration.

It will be easily seen that the author has steadily emphasized how each one of Faust's transitional states has borne in itself the germ and promise of something nobler and better. In his "obscure aspiration" he has ever groped half unconsciously for the right way, and ever found it. The lesson which Goethe wished to inculcate by this uninterrupted and unmiraculous upward growth of Faust is so apparent that it needs no explanation.

Helen's form dissolves in the cloud.

The cloud deposits Faust on one of the mountains of Germany, and, while dissolving, assumes the form of a woman, closely resembling her whom he has so lately lost. As he sees it soaring aloft, growing ever dimmer to his sight, he apostrophizes it as the embodiment of the joys of his youth, to which he must now bid a last farewell. Graver cares and labors are awaiting him, and calmly and with manly resolution he turns toward the future, though not without a shade of regret at the loss of what has once been so dear to him and the memory of which is still so beautiful.

Faust growing beyond Mephisto's reach.

The present exalted mood of Faust does not please Mephisto. He feels that his victim is growing beyond his reach. He therefore tries dexterously to allure him by visions of political power and worldly glory; an elevated position in the state, he says, affords fine opportunities for sensual indulgence and ease. Failing to attract him by this prospect, the tempter impatiently remarks that Faust's sublime yearnings really amount to a mania; that they tend toward the moon; for on this earth they surely will never be realized; to which Faust, with a lofty consciousness of his strength, gives this reply: —

> "Not so! This sphere of earthly soil
> Still gives us room for lofty doing.
> Astounding plans e'en now are brewing:
> I feel new strength for bolder toil."

Faust resolves to tame the ocean.

This "astounding plan" to which he will apply the whole energy of his will is of a magnitude befitting the moral and intellectual stature to which he has now attained. The ocean, that vast unfruitful expanse, which is ever encroaching upon the fertile land, he will tame and subdue; he will set a limit to its power, compel it to recede, and wrest from it the soil which the fierce turmoil of the waves makes barren and unproductive, —

> "If aught could drive me to despair, 't were truly
> The aimless force of elements unruly.
> . . . . . .
> Let that high joy be mine for evermore,
> To shut the lordly Ocean from the shore,
> The watery waste to limit and to bar,
> And push it back upon itself afar!"

A symbolic act.

It is evident that the author, instead of representing in detail Faust's beneficent activity for the welfare of humanity, chooses a single act, symbolic of its general scope and tendency. We are, no doubt, to understand that Faust, animated by Goethe's own spirit, opposes the disorderly and revolutionary elements in the moral as in the physical world, and furthers by all legitimate means the healthful processes of development by which mankind is ever surely but slowly advancing toward a better social state.

Faust interferes in the war between the emperor and the pretender.

Faust plainly sees that in order to accomplish his grand design he must take part in the political life of the nation; he must occupy an important position and wield a powerful influence, not for its own sake, but as a means of doing good. With this in view, he half reluctantly accepts Mephisto's advice to interfere in the war which is just raging between the legitimate emperor and a pretender to the throne whose cause has been espoused by the rebellious subjects. War, as a destructive agency, a violent interruption of healthy and orderly growth, is repugnant to him; but for all that he

is willing to help the rightful sovereign, worthless though he be, in his attempt to regain the power which he has hitherto so flagrantly abused.

Vischer's criticism on the Second Part.

Fr. Vischer is of opinion (and many will probably side with him) that the Second Part of the drama would have been much more effective if Goethe had, for the moment, suspended his constitutional aversion to politics, allowing his hero to arrive at some independent conclusion regarding the merits of the struggle, and then to espouse the cause of the party the supremacy of which he believed to be for the best interests of the land. As a clear-sighted and noble-minded patriot, fired with enthusiasm for what he thought to be right, and ardently devoting himself to the promotion of a just cause, Faust would have found a much worthier sphere for the exercise of his benevolent activity, would have played a more significant rôle, and would have made his influence more widely felt as the benefactor of his nation. He must have been well aware that the feeble and pleasure-loving emperor, whose pettiness he fully recognizes, could never, even with his hollow show of legitimacy, rise to the dignity of a great and unselfish ruler. "Hereditary asses," as Napoleon called the Bourbons, cannot even "by the grace of God" hide their ears under the imperial lion's skin, and feign the voice and the bearing of the monarch of the forest. Goethe, as the sequel shows, did not, in spite of his monarchical sympathies, delude himself in regard to the necessary consequences of the sovereign's worthlessness. As soon as the victory over the pretender is achieved, by Mephisto's magic rather than by Faust's strategical wisdom, he immediately relapses into his former impotence and apathy. His intellectual nullity, however, gives Faust only the greater power over him, and enables him to carry out his grand designs without fear of interference. It is as the actual, though not the nominal,

Faust's mistake in espousing the cause of the worthless emperor.

The emperor's worthlessness gives Faust greater freedom of action.

ruler of a free and happy people that Faust is to reach the highest possibility of human existence, and unfold wisely and peacefully the vast inner wealth which he has been unconsciously storing within his being during his long æsthetic and moral apprenticeship.

As a reward for his services, Faust demands and obtains the sovereignty over the coast of the empire.

VI.

A LONG time has again elapsed. Faust, who has now attained the full measure of years allotted to man, has carried out his great plan for the improvement of the land; he has pushed the ocean back from the shore, dug canals to facilitate trade and travel, and opened the realm to foreign commerce. According to Goethe's own statement to Eckermann, he is a hundred years old; but this is perhaps not to be interpreted with strict literalness; his physical strength is yet unbroken, and his intellect is active in gigantic plans for the development of the resources of the empire. Fifth Act.

In the first scene, the poet introduces an aged couple, Philemon and Baucis, who own a cottage and a small plot of land on a hill near the shore. The possession of this hill is of considerable importance to Faust, and he has repeatedly tried to persuade them to sell it or to exchange it for a larger and more desirable property in another locality; but they stubbornly refuse to listen to his proposals. The home where they have so happily spent their long lives is too dear to them; they cannot consent to part with it. A traveler who, after many years of absence, returns to the region, enters their cottage, and to him they open their hearts, expressing their regret and indignation at the many new-fangled notions which the strange lord has introduced into this once so peaceful district. He has removed and destroyed old landmarks which were dear and familiar to the eye, erected dikes and dug canals, and turned everything upside down. And still, with all his wealth and power, he is not con- Philemon and Baucis.

tented, but is determined to deprive them of their poor little property. The wife has a superstitious dread of Faust; she has seen fires burning along the shore in the night, and is confident that in order to perform his miracles he offers up human sacrifices to strange gods. The husband is superior to such superstitions, and gently ridicules the garrulity of his wife; but she persists in her belief that Faust is a sorcerer, and declines to listen to argument. The good old people betake themselves with the traveler to the neighboring chapel, whence the vesper bell is just calling them to their evening devotions. However the times may change, they will still put their trust in their old God.

Their dread of Faust.

By this worthy couple Goethe wished to represent the respectable conservative element in society which fights facts with sentiment, and persistently refuses to be convinced by the clear logic of events. The old which is doomed to destruction is always so beautiful; the fondest memories of our youth are interwoven with it, and the new which is to take its place has a cold and uncertain look. The daring innovator who attacks the hallowed, time-honored institutions which have come down to us from the past becomes a personal enemy, whose aims are selfish and dangerous to the peace of the community. No punishment can be too severe for him. The conservative class can never do him justice, and even the good which he accomplishes must have been achieved by illegitimate means. Our own snug and comfortable chimney-corner is much nearer and dearer to us than the welfare of society at large; bravely skeptical of the strength of the current which hurries the world onward, we flatter ourselves that we can stem the tide, and are ruthlessly borne away, chimney-corner, comfort, and all. And still we meant no harm; like Philemon and Baucis, we were excellent people who only demanded the right to live in our narrow, contented obscurity, unaffected by the changes of time.

The conservative element in society typified by Philemon and Baucis.

This process, cruel though it be, and, superficially considered, unjust to the individual, history is continually repeating. It is the well-established law by which the great body of humanity is steadily renewing itself; all dead and worn-out matter is thrown off, and its place is supplied by new and vital tissues. The path of progress, it is well-nigh a truism to say, is strewn with the corpses of innocent victims who trusted in sentiment rather than in truth, and whose only offense was that they had already long been dead.

The victims of progress.

I have little doubt that it is in his symbolic capacity, as the representative of the human race, that Faust in the following scene gives the command to oust Philemon and Baucis from their inheritance; and we should therefore be cautious in drawing any inference from this as to his personal character. A careful consideration of the text rather favors this symbolic interpretation. He would willingly have spared the old couple; but it is essential to the completion of his grand design that he should build a tower of observation on this very hill, where the linden-sheltered cottage and the chapel with its tinkling bell (both symbols of individual comfort and sentiment) are now standing. Mephistopheles, whom he charges to carry out his errand, interprets it in his own way, and burns the cottage and the chapel; Philemon and Baucis had foolishly resisted, and when they saw the flames had died of fright.

It is in his symbolic capacity that Faust ousts the old couple from their inheritance.

The burning of the cottage and the chapel.

I am inclined to believe that this, too, has a deeper significance. The discoverer is not at first aware of the revolutionary energy of the truth which he has evolved; the social reformer does not clearly perceive, in its full extent, the pitiless logic of the events which are first set in motion by the benevolent scheme which he wrought out in the ardor of his soul. Faust had confidently consoled himself with the expectation that Philemon and Baucis would in

time thank him for having, against their will, removed them to a richer and larger estate, where they might spend their last days in prosperity and ease. When he hears of their death he curses the violent deed, for which he disclaims all responsibility. And yet he was, although without his own intent, the cause of their ruin.

The four gray women.

As Faust stands at midnight on the balcony of his palace, gazing regretfully at the fire which is still flickering feebly among the smoking ruins, he sees four phantom women — Care, Want, Necessity, and Guilt — hovering toward him. He retires into the palace and closes the door after him; but Care steals in through the key-hole. The others keep circling about the abode of the mighty man, but they cannot gain entrance. It is especially significant that Goethe here excludes Guilt. Merely as an individual man who encroaches upon his neighbor's right, Faust cannot be excused, but in his representative capacity he is the half unconscious agent of a higher power, the executor of the inexorable law, and as such the poet may well declare him guiltless. But Care is the companion of every mortal, be he high or lowly; she comes to Faust to prepare the way for her brother, Death. He strives vainly to shake her off; with his calm, clear reason he tries to drive her away; but in the end he must succumb. Care

Faust is blinded.

breathes upon his eyes and blinds him; in other words, he is a mortal man, and, with all his strength of resolution, cannot resist the sure on-coming of physical decay. The intensity of his mental activity has consumed his bodily strength as the flame consumes the candle. Nevertheless, his courage is still undaunted; a great undertaking, which he has long had closely at heart, leaves him no rest; he must press onward while it is yet

Regrets that he has resorted to magic.

time. In a brief retrospective view of his life, he finds only one cause for genuine regret, that instead of trusting in the slow and healthful processes of Nature he had resorted to the aid of magic,

cursed the world, and leagued himself with supernatural powers. Now, as the crowning glory of his long life, stands the ideal of a pure and free humanity (*Menschlichkeit*, not *Menschheit*): —

> "Stood I, O Nature! man alone in thee,
> Then were it worth one's while a man to be."

He had begun his career with Titanic yearnings for the unattainable, with impatient contempt for the narrowness of the human lot, with wild endeavors to overleap the limitations of Nature. Now that which once he esteemed so lightly has assumed an ideal value and beauty in his eyes. To be a man is to him in this moment more than to be a god. Since he began to live more distinctly in the higher regions of his soul, the possibilities of human happiness and of human development, even in this world, seem positively infinite. The world has become a pliable medium in his hands, moulding itself readily in obedience to his mighty thought. His benevolent interest in humanity has raised before him a new ideal of large-hearted, deep-bosomed happiness, which has shed a new glory upon existence, — no longer the shallow and breathless pleasure of passional gratification, but a calm and lofty joy which sets the deepest human fibres within his being vibrating. In this mood he is almost disposed to deem the world beyond this of small account: —

The fruit of Faust's experience.

> "The sphere of earth is known enough to me;
> The view beyond is barred immutably:
> A fool, who there his blinking eyes directeth,
> And o'er his clouds of peers a place expecteth!
> Firm let him stand and look around him well;
> This world means something to the capable.
> Why needs he through eternity to wend?
> He here acquires what he can apprehend."

This manly and resolute philosophy of life drives Care away. But Mephistopheles, who knows that the end must now soon come, has summoned to his aid a host of Lemures, infernal phantoms, who,

Mephisto summons the Lemures.

in anticipation of their victory, dig Faust's grave outside his palace windows. The old man, hearing the clanking of their spades, is reminded of his great work, and comes out to give directions, groping his way along the door-posts. A widely extended marshy plain breathes pestilence in the neighborhood, and makes long tracts of land uninhabitable. To drain this has long been his desire; he already sees in spirit the prosperity which will soon bloom where barrenness and desolation now hold sway. Too intent upon his goal to have any sorrow to spare for his bodily infirmity, he gives free vent to his imagination; the future unrolls itself before him; one rapturous vision succeeds another, all showing him in prophetic anticipation the blessed results of his labor, not to himself, but to generations yet unborn. He sees a free people living in a free land, not in slothful security, but girt about by dangers which will ever arouse their best energies and keep them active and vigilant: —

Faust resolves to drain the marsh.

A free people in a free land.

"To many millions let me furnish soil,
Though not secure, yet free to active toil;
Green, fertile fields, where men and herds go forth
At once, with comfort, on the newest earth,
And swiftly settled on the hill's firm base,
Created by the bold, industrious race.
A land like Paradise here, round about;
Up to the brink the tide may roar without,
And though it gnaw, to burst with force the limit,
By common impulse all unite to hem it.
Yes, to this thought I hold with firm persistence;
The last result of wisdom stamps it true:
He only earns his freedom and existence,
Who daily conquers them anew.
Thus here, by dangers girt, shall glide away
Of childhood, manhood, age, the vigorous day:
And such a throng I fain would see, —
Stand on free soil among a people free!
Then dared I hail the moment fleeing:
'*Ah, still delay — thou art so fair.*'
The traces cannot, of mine earthly being,

In æons perish, — they are there!
In proud fore-feeling of such lofty bliss,
I now enjoy the highest moment — this!"

He has spoken the fatal words; the contract is according to the letter, though not according to its spirit, fulfilled; Faust falls dead to the ground, and the Lemures consign his mortal parts to the keeping of Mother Earth, whom he has ever loved so well. According to the letter Mephisto has won his wager, while in reality he has lost it. Instead of subjugating Faust's mighty soul, he has been subjugated by it. The moment of highest bliss did not come through his agency, but in spite of him; not by sensual gratification, but through a pure, exalted joy at the blessings which would flow to Faust's fellow-men from his unselfish activity. From a eudemonist, — a seeker for selfish happiness, — he has grown by imperceptible degrees to what Herbert Spencer calls an altruist, a high-minded laborer for the common good. It is the noblest type of the race, as Goethe conceived it, whose spiritual biography is described to us in the successive stages of his development. The conclusion is inevitable that, according to Goethe, man is capable, without miraculous interference from above, of working out his own salvation.

Faust's death.

The concluding scene is wholly symbolic in character, and must have been suggested to the author by the reading of some mediæval miracle-play. Although we cannot help feeling that it is not the ending we should expect for such a noble poem, it would be daring to suggest a different one. There is something fantastically operatic about the successive celestial pageantries, and it is not to be denied that, with all their soaring, aerial rhythm, the short-lined dactylic-spondaic choruses at last become a little monotonous. Nevertheless the scene is replete with profound thought, and the hovering, light-footed metres, which scarcely seem to touch the earth, impress one with a sense of infinity which a heavier, more

The operatic character of the concluding scene.

strictly philosophic treatment must necessarily have excluded. Long, radiant vistas of blissful being seem to burst upon us at every change and turn of the melodious verse, and even the mythological drapery in which the scene is clothed has an infinite, allegorical suggestiveness of things which seem to demand a more exalted logic than that of time and space.

Mephistopheles, who was of course incapable of comprehending the nature of Faust's sublime happiness, honestly believes that he has won his wager, and accordingly sends his infernal spirits to claim possession of Faust's soul. The wager had stipulated that when Faust "on an idler's bed should stretch himself in quiet," when the devil should have beguiled him with lying flatteries and befooled him with rich enjoyments, until, self-pleased, he should have lost all strength for higher aspiration, — then, and not until then, should he belong to his enemy. We have seen how utterly Mephisto has been vanquished in his endeavors to lead Faust toward this state of being; how triumphantly the intended victim has asserted his right of self-determination against all the plots which Mephisto had laid for his ruin. The issue of the combat between the angels which have been sent down from heaven to bear the soul upwards and the satellites of the devil is therefore a foregone conclusion. By an eternal and immutable law the spiritual state of a man at the time of his death must, at least temporarily, determine his place in the spiritual universe with more absolute certainty than his intellectual and moral qualities determine his place in human society. Only, in the other world there can be no room for accidents of birth, station, etc., or anything corresponding to these on a higher plane of being. There the law reigns supreme. This does not, however, as Goethe plainly indicates, exclude the possibility of unending change and growth toward higher and nobler conditions. Faust accordingly is not

Mephisto's struggle for Faust's soul.

The cause of Mephisto's defeat.

saved because Mephisto, by a very unworthy accident, momentarily relaxes his zeal for his possession, but because his whole life, with all its errors and "obscure aspirations," has had a steady upward tendency, which finds its natural and inevitable culmination in heavenly blessedness. The devil could have no power over him because he is spiritually so infinitely remote from the plane of ethical existence which the devil represents. He could no more go to the infernal regions than a balloon loaded with some rarefied gas could sink toward the earth.

Faust's upward flight from earth through the ever ascending spheres of heavenly felicity is symbolically represented by the three holy anchorites and the various companies of angels, penitent women, and midnight-born children which he encounters on his way. The first of the anchorites, the Pater Ecstaticus, who inhabits the lowest region of the sacred mount, is restlessly hovering up and down, now enraptured by the vision of celestial purity, now struggling painfully with the yet untamed desires of his sensual nature. The next, the Pater Profundus, is also conscious of the power of his earthly passions, over which he has not yet achieved the final victory; but he is inwardly permeated with a sense of the Divine Love, "to which it is given all things to form and all to bear." The Pater Seraphicus represents the next step in the ascending scale of being; blessed peace reigns within him; his soul is purged of all earthly impurity. A still higher state of spiritual existence is indicated in the divine rapture of the Doctor Marianus. The angels soaring in the higher atmosphere, bearing the immortal part of Faust, triumphantly proclaim his redemption: —

Faust's ascension.

The three holy anchorites.

Doctor Marianus.

> "The noble spirit now is free,
> And saved from evil scheming:
> *Whoe'er aspires unweariedly*
> *Is not beyond redeeming.*

And if he feels the grace of Love
That from On High is given,
The Blessed Hosts, that wait above,
Shall welcome him to Heaven."

Mater Gloriosa.

The Mater Gloriosa comes soaring into space, followed by a host of penitent women. It is the purest and tenderest attributes of the Deity, — what Mr. Beecher calls the Motherhood of God, — which Goethe has symbolized in her. Among the penitent hosts that are appealing to her mercy appears one, "formerly named Margaret," stealing closer to her, before whom once in the hour of her bitterest agony she had poured forth her sorrow-laden heart. The metre and the very words vividly recall that former occasion, and emphasize the contrast: —

A penitent woman formerly named Margaret.

"Incline, O maiden,
With mercy laden,
Thy gracious countenance upon my bliss!
My loved, my lover,
His trials over
In yonder world, returns to me in this!
. . . . . .
The spirit-choir around him seeing,
New to himself, he scarce divines
His heritage of new-born being,
When like the Holy Host he shines.
Behold how he each band hath cloven,
The earthly life had round him thrown,
And through his garb, of ether woven,
The early force of Youth is shown!
Vouchsafe to me that I instruct him!
Still dazzles him the Day's new glare.

MATER GLORIOSA.

Rise thou to higher spheres! Conduct him,
Who, feeling thee, shall follow there."

Love is here an actual spiritual force, which literally draws two spiritual beings together. One is reminded of Swe-

denborg's statement that in the other world similarity and difference in the spiritual states of angels are actually expressed in space as nearness and distance. Several other passages, too, as where the Blessed Boys enter into the eyes of the Pater Seraphicus, and especially the chorus foreshadowing Faust's heavenly activity, indicate an acquaintance on the author's part with the writings of the Swedish seer. Faust, whose spirit has been matured and strengthened by a long, victorious combat with earthly temptations, whose intellect has been enriched by the results of a wide and complex experience of the world, is to instruct the Blessed Boys, who had been torn away from this mundane sphere in the hour of their birth, ere the possibilities of their being had yet been developed. He is to foster the germ of manhood in them until it reaches the highest growth of which it is capable; he is to impart to them that wisdom which he has gained by actual contact with evil, by his tumultuous struggle and final victory. The rich complexity of his mind employed in the service of the good and the beautiful will, if I understand the poet rightly, enable him to rise to a higher state of spiritual perfection than is possible for those whose goodness is only innocent simplicity and ignorance of evil.

Reminiscences of Swedenborg.

Faust's heavenly activity.

Although Goethe never displayed any anxiety regarding his fate after death, many utterances might easily be collected from his conversations and correspondence, showing that the subject frequently occupied his thought.

Goethe's views regarding heavenly felicity.

"I confess I should not know what to do with heavenly happiness," he once said to Chancellor von Müller,[1] "if it did not offer me new problems to solve, new difficulties to conquer."

Dr. J. Falck relates that at Wieland's funeral Goethe

[1] *Goethe's Unterhaltungen mit Kanzler Fr. v. Müller*, p. 99. Stuttgart, 1870.

appeared to be greatly moved at the thought of his separation from his life-long friend. To Falck's question, what he supposed Wieland's soul was at that moment doing, he answered solemnly: "Nothing small, nothing unworthy, nothing incompatible with the moral greatness of his life. . . . There is no possibility that under any circumstances, in the course of nature, such powers of soul could be annihilated. Nature is not so wasteful of her capital. Wieland's soul was to her a treasure. And besides, his long life did not diminish these beautiful talents, but increased them."[1]

"New activities analogous to those in which we have been tested."

Again, in a letter to Zelter, the following significant passage is found: "Let us continue our work until one of us, before or after the other, returns to the ether at the summons of the World-Spirit! Then may the Eternal (*der ewig Lebendige*) not refuse to us new activities analogous to those wherein we have here been tested! If He shall also add memory and a continued sense of the right and the good in His fatherly kindness, we shall then surely all the sooner take hold of the wheels which drive the cosmic machinery (*in die Kämme des Weltgetriebes eingreifen*)."[2]

"Faust" incomplete without the Second Part.

I think that any one who has followed me so far will readily admit that the poem of "Faust," in its higher symbolic significance, would have been a very fragmentary and incomplete production if the Second Part had never been written. The First Part seizes the very key-note and fundamental principle of all tragedy, — the conflict between the finite and the infinite, the inadequacy of finite reality to carry out the glowing aspirations of the Titanic, infinite spirit. It ends with a discord; it suggests no reconciliation. The Second Part elaborates and amplifies the problem, and suggests the only solution of which it is capable, — the atonement to the race

[1] Quoted by Kreyssig, p. 251, 252.

[2] Bayard Taylor's translation. Quoted also by Kreyssig, p. 252.

of the wrong done to the individual. To me this solution seems by no means an inadequate one. It is in strict keeping with the spirit of modern science and philosophy. It seems to be the last teaching of evolution, as surely it is of sociology, that the individual exists for the benefit of the race. Nature is ever ready to sacrifice the interests of the former to those of the latter. A wrong, once done, can never be undone: but Faust chose the better and manlier part in atoning for his, not by his death, but by his life.

Atonement to the race for the wrong done to the individual.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER.

SCHILLER.

I.

TRADITION seldom embalms a great man's character in its totality. It steadily simplifies it, allowing its more fleeting and accidental traits to be obliterated, until at length but one or two essential characteristics remain. These then become the symbol of the man and the representative idea by which he is henceforth known.

Thus to the Germans of the present day Schiller is the poet of liberty. To the nation at large the passionate rebellion of his turbulent youth, which he himself inscribed with the motto "In Tyrannos," is much dearer than the calm and sober idealism of his later years, when his nature had found its true centre of gravity. A people so long oppressed by the parental tyranny of rulers who, like the Grand Duke of Würtemberg, systematically plundered their subjects, and sold them to fight against liberty in foreign lands, might well be forgiven for ignoring their poet's reconciliation with reality, while his sonorous protest against it is still ringing with responsive echoes in their own hearts.

Schiller the poet of liberty.

A half-stifled revolutionary sentiment, kindled in part by the writings of Rousseau, was, at the end of the last century, smouldering everywhere in the breasts of the German youth; the deep-rooted dissatisfaction burst forth here and there in feeble demonstrations; but the princes as yet felt themselves strong enough to bid defiance to the popular sentiment.

Why popular discontent in Germany did not break out in a revolution.

Brave men like Schubart and Moser, who dared to criticise the immorality of princely libertines, were confined in dungeons without trial or judgment, and the great herd of the people sighed under their burden, or lapsed into silent, sullen apathy.

The principal obstacle to a general revolution in Germany was the complete dismemberment of the empire. A local uprising in Würtemberg, or Saxony, or the provinces of the Rhine, could never be formidable as long as the princes, bound together by common interests, were ever ready to reach each other a helping hand, while the isolated populace of the various principalities remained unknown to each other, and had no effective means of communication. In France, which, unlike Germany, is a political organism, with Paris for its heart, where the public opinion of the capital soon makes itself felt in the remotest province, a discontent so universal would have led to the overthrow of the government. Among the Germans it found its expression only in books, and its chief representative is Schiller.

Comparison with France.

It is easy to understand why Goethe, whom fortune had smiled upon from his very cradle, should have exemplified in his whole literary activity Hegel's famous postulate: "That which is is rational" ("Das Wirkliche ist das Vernünftige"). To a handsome and brilliant patrician reality is apt to put on its holiday attire, and to appear in its gayest, most engaging aspect. But to a plebeian like Schiller, whose father had risen from a barber to a surgeon, and thence to a non-commissioned officer, it wears a less genial appearance. Goethe, whom Nature has treated so kindly, returns her affection: with patient endeavor he studies her great and serene laws; even her lighter moods and apparent inconsistencies are precious to him; her ways appear wise and good, and he meets them with willing subordination. Schiller is met on the very threshold of his life by an iron destiny, which frustrates his cherished desires, and forces him into the strait-jacket of

Goethe and Schiller compared.

military discipline, against which his sensitive nature revolts. The same pseudo-parental tyranny, represented by the Grand Duke of Würtemberg, continues, even after he has reached man's estate, to dictate to him his sentiments as well as his course of action, until at last the sorely-harassed Titan breaks the chains of authority, and hurls his anathemas back against his benevolent oppressor. In opposition to the base and unjust reality he places the fervid ideals of his own soul; his thoughts move in high realms of fancy, and Utopian dreams rush in upon him. Society, the feudal tyranny of the governments, are to blame for all the crime and misery which prevail in the world, and the remedy, the panacea for all the ills that beset us, is liberty. Such in brief is Schiller's youthful creed; a strong and fiery nature, deeply impressed with the idea of its human dignity, placed under similar circumstances, must of necessity have arrived at similar conclusions. The happy man to whom the world is good remains a conservative; the unhappy man to whom the world is bad becomes a radical.

The parental tyranny of the Grand Duke of Würtemberg.

The political creed of Schiller's youth.

Johann Christoph Friedrich Schiller was born in the town of Marbach, in Würtemberg, November 10, 1759. His ancestors for several generations back had been bakers, and had lived in various towns in the Grand Duchy of Würtemberg. His father, Johann Caspar Schiller, had been apprenticed to a barber, and had obtained from him some rudimentary knowledge of surgery. During the war of the Austrian Succession he enlisted, serving now as a surgeon, now as a private soldier. As the hostilities progressed, he rose in rank, was appointed ensign and adjutant to the Duke of Würtemberg, and at the end of the war he had attained the rank of a lieutenant. In 1749, he had married Elizabeth Dorothea, the daughter of George Kodweis, the landlord of the Golden Lion. After peace had been concluded at Paris the duke did not dismiss Caspar

Schiller born November 10, 1759.

His father a military surgeon.

Schiller from his service, but gave him the supervision of his extensive nurseries at Ludwigsburg and Solitude, and allowed him to retire from the army with the rank of a captain. He appears to have been a pious, conscientious, and hard-working man, determined although never needlessly severe to his inferiors, but, as his letters to the duke prove, excessively humble and rather obsequious toward his superiors. However, the epistolary etiquette of those days demanded extreme humility and hypocritical adulation on the part of the subject toward his sovereign, even if the latter, as was the case with Karl Eugen of Würtemberg, was a notorious libertine.

Characterisation of Schiller's father.

Schiller's mother was an excellent, mild-mannered matron, tall of stature and well proportioned, with a countenance full of gentleness and affection. Her children all loved and revered her, and the poet, who bore a striking resemblance to her, always tenderly cherished her memory.

Schiller's mother.

Schiller was not a precocious or in any wise remarkable child. From his birth he was feeble, being subject to spasms, which, however, ere he grew up he had entirely conquered. He was fond of going to church; and, climbing up on a chair in the nursery, would improvise sermons and deliver them with much emphasis to his elder sister, Christophine, and whoever else might happen to be present. He was profoundly in earnest, and if any one laughed he would run away, and it would require much coaxing to induce him to resume his discourse. His earliest instruction he received from Rev. Philip Moser, the pastor of the village of Lorch, where the family was then living. Mr. Moser was a very learned man, severe but just in all his dealings, and, on the whole, a very impressive personality. It seemed then to the boy's fancy a most splendid possibility that perhaps he too might one day be a man like Moser, and he accordingly determined to educate himself for the church. The parents were

The poet's earliest childhood.

Rev. Philip Moser.

greatly rejoiced at this resolution, and on every occasion encouraged it. These clerical aspirations were, however, soon rudely thwarted by the interference of the grand duke, who in 1770 had established a military seminary, for which he needed pupils. He therefore wrote to Captain Schiller, requesting him to send his son there, to be educated at his expense. The captain was greatly distressed; the son had no inclination for a military life, and, moreover, the whole family had set their hearts on seeing him a clergyman. He summoned all his courage, and respectfully declined the duke's most gracious offer. But Karl Eugen, who was no less violent in his benevolence than he was when actuated by hostile motives, would hear of no objections; he repeated his offer twice, and each time more pointedly. The duke would take care to procure a much more profitable position for the son than he ever could hope to gain as a clergyman; in return, he should devote his life to the service of the Grand Ducal house of Würtemberg. Of course the father was well aware that this amounted to an absolute command; and as he and his whole family were dependent upon the duke for their subsistence, they could not afford to have any will of their own. Accordingly, with much fear and trembling, Johann Christoph was, at the age of thirteen, dispatched to the military seminary. To counteract the impression of his former reluctance the captain addressed a somewhat obsequious letter to the superintendent of the seminary, in which the following passage occurs: "When in centuries to come our descendants shall bear the stamp of virtue and wisdom on their foreheads, will they not then recognize and confess, 'This we owe to the great Karl'?"[1]

Schiller's clerical aspirations.

The duke demands that Schiller shall be sent to the military seminary.

Captain Schiller to the superintendent of the military seminary.

The seminary was not exclusively devoted to military instruction; the curriculum was gradually being extended, and

[1] Emil Palleske: *Schiller's Leben und Werke.* Erster Band, p. 56. Stuttgart, 1877.

among the accessory branches taught at the time of Schiller's entrance was jurisprudence, which he preliminarily selected for his future profession. He appears to have been an exemplary scholar; prosecuted his studies with much earnestness, held occasionally devotional exercises, in which some of his fellow-students participated, and expended a good deal of enthusiasm on Klopstock, Gerstenberg, and other poets, whose works then, for the first time, fell into his hands. He even wrote a politico-religious epic entitled "Moses," modeled after Klopstock's "Messiah," and a youthful drama, "The Christians," inspired by the reading of Gerstenberg's terrific tragedy, "Ugolino."

The seminary not an exclusively military institution.

The epic, "Moses," and the drama, "The Christians."

Duke Karl Eugen had spent his youth in the wildest sensual excesses. His chief ambition had been to emulate the luxury and the splendid vices of the French court at Versailles. But to gratify this ambition he needed money, and Würtemberg was a small and not very rich country, whose legitimate revenues did not suffice to support the expensive and licentious court which the prince was determined to maintain. He therefore resorted to all kinds of oppressive measures to increase his income: he established a bureau for the sale of monopolies and offices; he began an extensive traffic for the sale of his subjects, to fight as mercenaries in foreign lands; and when his capital ventured to remonstrate against these lawless doings he turned his back with magnificent scorn upon the capital, shook its dust off his feet, and removed his residence to Ludwigsburg. His wife he had put away, and now lived with his mistress, the beautiful Franzisca von Hohenheim, who, however, succeeded in turning him from his evil ways, and continued to exert a very wholesome influence upon him. In true tyrant fashion he now revenged himself upon his favorites for the abuses for which he was himself responsible: he

The Duke Karl Eugen characterized.

Franzisca von Hohenheim.

dismissed his superfluous courtiers, put his expenditures within a rational limit, and devoted much of his energy and zeal, which he had hitherto expended in riotous living, to the personal supervision of the newly-founded seminary. It is, however, very questionable whether the seminary was much benefited by his supervision, for he exercised his authority here, as elsewhere, in a thoroughly characteristic manner. He wished the students to regard him as a father, and yet always made them feel the wide distance which separated him from them. He was continually interfering with the authority of the teachers, especially in the presentation of themes for essays, which instead of encouraging a manly frankness of expression, as was his nominal aim, stimulated the scholars to hypocrisy and fawning obsequiousness. Thus, on one occasion, he propounded the question: Which among you is the meanest? And every one of the unhappy pupils had in an elaborate essay to answer this ridiculous question. Schiller names a certain youth, Charles Kempf, who was notorious for his poor recitations, but expresses the hope that he will improve as he grows older. He ends with a eulogy on the duke. On another occasion each student is to write a characterization of himself and his comrades, especially with reference to Christian sentiment, conduct toward teachers, and loyalty toward his princely patron. Schiller again draws on his rich imagination, and pours out his boyish gratitude in the most extravagant language.

Karl Eugen's patronage of the military seminary.

Singular subjects for essays.

"This prince," he writes, "this father who wishes to make me happy, is and must be much more precious to me than my parents, who are directly dependent upon his favor. If I only dared to approach him with the rapture with which my gratitude inspires me,"—and much more in the same strain. At the end he ventures to give a vague hint that he believes he could be more useful to his country and his sovereign as a clergyman than in any other position; but it fails of its effect.

Schiller's boyish loyalty.

The seminary removed to Stuttgart.

In 1775, when the duke had finally forgiven his capital for daring to disapprove of his evil course, the seminary was removed to Stuttgart, where he could still give it the benefit of his personal superintendence. The curriculum was still further enlarged, many excellent professors were engaged, and a spacious building, near the ducal castle, formerly used as barracks, was fitted up into dormitories and lecture rooms. The institution was henceforth known as the Military Academy. The discipline was very severe, though brutal corporal punishment was not very frequently resorted to. Everything went like clock-work, with a painful military regularity. The students rose from bed, dressed, prayed, marched to breakfast, pulled out their chairs, and sat down, all by word of command; just so many minutes were granted for each act, and no allowance was made for individual preferences. They were divided, according to their birth, into *Cavaliers* and *Eleven* (pupils), corresponding very nearly to the distinction at English universities between noblemen and commoners. The cavaliers had the inestimable privilege on public occasions of kissing the hand of the duke, while the pupils were only permitted to kiss the hem of his garment. There were no vacations. Ladies were not permitted to enter the grounds of the academy, with the exception of the Countess Franzisca, the duke's mistress. She had access to the building at all times, but probably rarely appeared except in the company of her lover. At certain stated times of the year the students were dispatched by companies, marching in military order, to masquerades, where they were to be subjected to the refining influences of the gentler sex; *i. e.*, they were to meet the young ladies of a girls' school, which flourished under the special patronage of the Countess Franzisca. The embarrassment, awkwardness, and general misery of both parties on such occasions were delightful to behold. It was

Organization and discipline.

How the academy was subjected to the influence of the gentler sex.

a contrivance worthy of the genius of the duke, and is thoroughly characteristic of its inventor. In order to strengthen the loyalty of the students it was thought necessary to cut them off as far as possible from all outside influences; they were even forbidden to revisit the houses of their parents from the time of their entrance into the academy until their final dismissal. If any one had been guilty of insubordination or any other misdemeanor, he received a ticket from the teacher who made the complaint against him, indicating the character of his offense. These tickets were at certain stated times presented to the duke, who asked the culprit whether he acknowledged himself guilty, and in case of a negative reply permitted him to plead his cause. That the duke on such occasions did not always assume the tone of a stern mentor is proved by a delightful little anecdote which Palleske quotes from Ludwig von Wolzogen. A certain young nobleman, Count von Nassau, who was famous for his frequent collisions with the authorities, and accordingly reaped a rich harvest of "tickets," was once confronted by Karl Eugen and Franzisca, as they entered the house from the garden. Von Nassau, at the duke's request, presented the record of his misdemeanors. "Now, sir," thundered the duke, with an assumption of severity, "what would you do, if you were in my place, sir?" The young man, never for a moment losing his composure, gave the countess a hearty kiss, pulled her arm through his, and turned his back on his astonished judge, saying, with an air of good-natured contempt, "Come, Fanny dear, and let the stupid youngster alone." Karl Eugen, who was not without admiration for any feat of daring, after a moment's wavering concluded to view the situation from its humorous side, and let the culprit escape.

Karl Eugen and the Count von Nassau.

To a restless and energetic nature like Schiller the monotonous routine of his life in the academy must have been very irksome. As we have seen, the poetic fire was already smouldering within him,

Schiller's dissatisfaction with the academy.

and with every year that passed it gathered fresh strength. Failing to derive any satisfaction from the study of jurisprudence, he exchanged it for medicine, attended lectures on anatomy and physiology, but remained restless and discontented as before. A much more congenial occupation he found in the reading of Plutarch and Rousseau, who for many years to come continued to be his favorite authors. Goethe's "Götz von Berlichingen," and especially "The Sorrows of Werther," made a profound impression upon him, and as usual stimulated him to imitation. With hot zeal he began to write a drama in Werther's spirit, entitled "The Student of Nassau," which was to end with the suicide of the hero; but his enthusiasm cooled before the work was half finished, and it remained a fragment. Some of his fellow-students, who also felt within themselves stirrings of literary ambition, had attached themselves to him, and formed a sort of poetic fraternity, from which they all expected great results. Anonymous manuscripts were surreptitiously dispatched to publishers, but were as promptly returned. Wieland's translation of Shakespeare fell into their hands, and was eagerly devoured, but imperfectly comprehended, while Ossian filled them with an intoxication of rapture. They drifted with the Celtic bard through the mists that brooded over the solitary lakes, and listened to the sighing of the wind and the rustling of bulrushes on the strand.

The favorite authors of his youth.

Literary ambition.

A literary brotherhood.

The two great holidays of the academy were the birthdays of the duke and of the Countess Franzisca. These were usually celebrated by a public festival, during which fiery odes and addresses, overflowing with loyal enthusiasm, were delivered by the students; and now and then a dramatic trifle was enacted, composed especially for the occasion. Once, on the anniversary of the countess's birth, the duke propounded this astonishing query to the academy, and every student had to

School festivals and youthful oratory.

answer it in an essay: "Is too much kindness, condescension (*Leutseligkeit*), and great liberality, in the strictest sense, indispensable to virtue?" Schiller answers this in the negative, and rings the changes on his old theme, — the greatness and wisdom of the duke, and the exceptional excellence and virtue of his mistress. The essay, as a whole, is a most distressing performance, and makes the reader blush for Karl Eugen, and pity the poor scholar who found himself and those who were dearest to him in the power of a man who could entail such needless humiliation on his dependents.

In the mean while the time for Schiller's graduation drew near. He prepared a dissertation on the "Philosophy of Physiology," which on being submitted to the faculty was rejected on account of its "false sentiments," evidently derived from the reading of Shaftesbury and Rousseau, and its daring criticism of the famous poet and scientist, Haller, who was then held to be one of the greatest authorities in natural science. Schiller was recommended to remain for another year in the academy, and he knew that such a recommendation, indorsed by the duke, amounted to a command. It is needless to say that he was bitterly disappointed. Others, whom he knew to be his own inferiors in knowledge and natural ability, had obtained their degrees, and he was censured for his "sentiments," like a recreant school-boy.

His thesis rejected.

Schiller fails to obtain his degree.

The public distribution of diplomas was to take place December 14, 1779, and Schiller, although his thesis had been rejected, found himself the winner of four prizes. Karl August of Saxe-Weimar and Goethe happened at this time to be passing through the city, and were invited to attend the exercises of the academy; and Schiller, then an awkward, overgrown youth of twenty, saw for the first time the man at whose side he was before many years to stand as a trusted and honored friend. Karl Eugen had appointed Schiller, whose sonorous rhetoric

Goethe's visit to the academy.

was very effective on festal occasions, the orator of the day, and bade him discourse on "Virtue considered in its Consequences." The pupil, who by this time knew his master well, did not fail to take the hint contained in this title, and accordingly delivered a fervid eulogy on Franzisca von Hohenheim, whom in his peroration he apostrophized as the incarnation and visible embodiment of all virtue. Very likely he was himself quite unconscious of the irony of his words. The duke had trained the whole school to sing the praises of this woman; she was the only representative of her sex whom they were permittted to know, and as a representative of the sex it was but natural that they should worship her. It was not long, however, before Schiller had his eyes opened; in a poem entitled "The Bad Rulers" ("Die schlimmen Monarchen"), published three years later in his "Anthology," he finds the proper phrase to characterize such relations as existed between the countess and her princely lover.

Oration on "Virtue considered in its Consequences."

Meanwhile, the restraint imposed by the needlessly rigid discipline of the academy was with every day becoming more intolerable to the young poet. His honest pride, which was only the more sensitive for the fact that he was so well aware of his dependence upon the duke, was hourly wounded by these petty regulations, which hemmed him in like a bird in a cage, and restricted his freedom on every side. His self-respect suffered acutely, and he became gloomy and discontented. He had now passed his twentieth year, and was no longer a stripling, who had to be told when he was to go to bed, what books he was to read, and in what attire he must appear. The sense of having, by the caprice of the duke or of a professor, been unjustly forced to remain in a training school which he had long outgrown stung him to the quick, and filled him with a burning hatred of all tyranny and oppression. The utter helplessness of his position, his inability to resent

Schiller chafes against the severe discipline.

He is unjustly compelled to remain in the academy.

in any way the wrong which had been inflicted upon him, made this feeling doubly galling. What did it matter to the duke or the faculty whether an obscure pupil who subsisted on charity felt himself wronged and humilated? A society in which such inequalities of position could exist, which made one man the victim of another's whim without offering him any opportunity for redress, must be rotten in its very foundation. We must remember that Schiller had long been a disciple and an ardent admirer of Rousseau, and the conclusion that the semi-feudal organization of society was responsible for all individual suffering and injustice thus seemed quite natural to him. From his very cradle he had felt the iron clutches of necessity on his shoulders; in the depth of his soul there lay a passionate hunger for freedom, but not the smallest taste of it had life ever afforded him. What wonder, then, that he should protest against a reality which, while it offered some the amplest opportunities for self-development, had persistently thwarted his cherished plans, and placed him in hopeless subordination to a man whom he had ceased to respect?

He throws the responsibility for his own wretchedness upon society.

The time had now come for this long-suppressed rebellion to formulate itself into a definite protest. It had grown too imperious to suffer imprisonment. It demanded expression. A fable in which to clothe it was readily found. A simple story, by the unhappy poet Schubart, which accidentally fell into his hands, furnished him with the skeleton of a plot. Any other story would, no doubt, have served his purpose as well. A drama, in Rousseau's spirit, was projected, which was to show how the century, by its cant, its untruthfulness, and its servility to worn-out traditions, encouraged pettiness and hypocrisy, while it forced men of larger stature into outlawry by denying to them the natural conditions for a healthy, normal development. This, to be sure, was no small problem

He gives vent to his long-suppressed rebellion.

A story of Schubart suggests the plot of "The Robbers."

for a youth of twenty. But Schiller, stimulated by his sense of personal injury, felt himself equal to the task; he was conscious of strong forces dimly stirring within him, and aglow with creative ardor he wrote scene upon scene, and declaimed them with violent gestures to a few trusted comrades, to whom he had confided his secret. Frequently they were interrupted by unexpected visits from the duke or his minion, the inspector Niess, and then the manuscript suddenly vanished under a medical folio, which was always kept near at hand for such an emergency, and his highness would take his leave, commending the laudable industry of his protégé. Often the friends, to guard against such surprises, would hide themselves in some remote corner of the large building, and listen, full of shuddering admiration, to the rhapsodies of the young poet; or accompany him on his walks to a forest near the city, where he would entrance them by his sonorous and fervid eloquence. As the work progressed, and the intensity of the author's absorption increased, the allotted school tasks naturally became ever more irksome; nearly every moment of the day was occupied by lectures and recitations and other prescribed duties, and in the evening there was but little time for writing, as the lights in all the rooms had to be extinguished at an early hour; only in the sick-room a candle was permitted to burn during the whole night, and as with Schiller the night always was the most favorable time for literary composition, he feigned illness, and had himself put on the sick-list. Sometimes he wrote with feverish haste; at other times the difficulties under which he was laboring depressed him, and he would lapse into profound melancholy. The work was laid by, only to be resumed again as soon as his energy revived. Thus, amid discouragements, interruptions, and a hundred difficulties, "The Robbers" came into existence, and in 1780, when the author finally obtained his degree and left the academy, the drama was completed.

Surreptitious declamation.

"The Robbers" begun.

Secret labor on the tragedy.

II.

"I LOATHE this ink-wasting century, when I read in my Plutarch of great men." "The Robbers."

"Fie, fie, on this feeble century of eunuchs, which is good for nothing except to ruminate on the deeds of the past, to flog the heroes of antiquity in commentaries and belittle them in tragedies."

"Shall I squeeze my body into a corset, and cripple my free will with laws? The law has doomed to a snail's pace what would otherwise have been an eagle's flight. Law has never yet made a great man, but liberty breeds colossuses and extremes."

These fiery outbursts of the hero, Karl Moor, in the first scene in which he appears, may be taken as the key-note of the drama. The century is narrow-hearted, narrow-brained, — incapable of taking large views. Its ideals are petty and conventional; it exalts mediocrity and misjudges genius. Its blood is a pale, impotent sap, which creeps sluggishly through its veins. Its spiritual horizon is hopelessly circumscribed, its sky darkened by a thousand prejudices. Its back is burdened by a heavy load of useless traditions from former ages, which it is too weak or too timid to throw off. If a large-souled man has the misfortune to be born into such an age, he finds it difficult to breathe; if he rises to his full height, and demands free elbow-room, he finds himself hemmed in on all sides by the barriers which the past has erected round about him; and if he tries to surmount them or break them down, the world cries out against him; he is ostracized and outlawed.

The feebleness of the century the key-note of "The Robbers."

Karl Moor is such a giant, born among a race of pygmies. He thirsts for action. He has read the records of the great deeds of the heroes of the past, and he feels his soul akin to theirs. But in a century, the ideal of which is respectability, whereby it understands conformity to the conventional type, the field of action is necessarily narrow. Petty princes have divided the land between them, and their authority is absolute. Under such circumstances there can be no public life worthy of the ambition of a noble and energetic man. Being thus shut out from every larger sphere of action, Karl vents his superfluous vitality in mad pranks at the university, and becomes a hero among his fellow-students. Nature meant him for a leader, and his comrades easily subordinate themselves to him. His younger brother, Franz, a cool, calculating villain, takes advantage of the rumors which are spread abroad concerning Karl's wild career, invents base stories about him, intercepts his letters to his father, substitutes others of his own composition, — all with the purpose of inducing the father to disclaim his eldest son, thus allowing the younger to succeed to his possessions. Franz plays his part skillfully, and the old Count von Moor never for a moment suspects his treachery; in a paroxysm of anger and despair he curses Karl, but immediately repents of his hasty words, and bids Franz write to his brother that he is forgiven. Franz, however, communicates only the curse, but not the forgiveness. Karl, grieved and maddened by the relentless injustice of his father, organizes his comrades into a band of robbers, and retires with them into the Bohemian forests. He determines single-handed to wage war against the society which has outlawed him, to avenge the wrong and oppression under which the people are suffering. With his eighty trusty followers, he feels himself strong enough to defy the state; a detachment of soldiers, which is sent out to capture him, is defeated. He sacks

The character of Karl Moor.

Franz Moor's skillful tactics.

Karl is cursed by his father,

and becomes a highway robber.

towns, kills, and plunders, and becomes the terror of the neighborhood. At length his yearning for his betrothed, Amalia, induces him to return in disguise to his paternal castle. Franz, in the mean while, has exerted himself to win Amalia, and has, by an ingenious intrigue, succeeded in making her believe that Karl is dead. Nevertheless, his threats and entreaties are unavailing; she loathes him, and again and again repels his offer. Franz, after many fruitless attempts to kill his father by mental tortures, has at last lost his patience, and has imprisoned him in a vault, where it is his intention to starve him to death. But a servant who shares the secret has clandestinely brought him food, and thus preserved his life. On his return, Karl discovers all his brother's iniquity, and resolves to take a terrible vengeance; but before he can carry out his intention, Franz has ended his own life by strangling. The old count, on being confronted with his eldest-born son as the chieftain of a band of robbers, dies broken-hearted, and Amalia, at her own request, is slain by her lover's hand. Karl, to expiate his misdeeds, voluntarily surrenders himself to justice. A price of a thousand louis d'ors has been set on his head; he knows a poor laborer with eleven children whom this sum might save from misery. And he goes to seek him.

Karl returns to the paternal castle.

The tragic *dénouement.*

Such, in brief outlines, is the plot of "The Robbers." It is, as is easily observed, rather crudely constructed, full of violent contrasts, and betrays the youth of its author. There is nothing ingenious in the intrigue, no complication of motives, no attempt at subtlety in the portrayal of character. Franz, the philosophical villain, is hardly an exception; for his materialistic philosophy, though plausible, is very crude. Each situation is boldly conceived, and painted in glaring colors. The gestures recall the wildest barbarism of the Middle Ages; they are those of madmen or savages. The old Moor tears his face with his nails, and pulls out his hair; and Karl, mad-

Crude construction and needlessly violent diction.

dened by sorrow, runs his head against the trunk of an oak-tree. The ferocity of the robber Spiegelberg's language, and the barbaric extravagance of the adventures which he reports, seem to belong to the age of Italian Renaissance, and not to Germany in the eighteenth century. In all this there is nothing which a boy with a powerful imagination might not readily have invented. And yet, though faulty and immature, "The Robbers" was a splendid achievement for a youth of twenty. In the very idea of a man's flinging down the gauntlet to his age, and challenging it to mortal combat, there is a magnificent audacity which could not but captivate a public so long accustomed to the courteous feebleness of the imitators of the French rococo literature. Then the superb energy of the diction, its pronounced color, its sweep and fervor, went far to excuse its occasional coarseness and needless violence. And even if the characters of Karl and Franz are but youthful abstractions, and but feebly individualized, the psychological antithesis which they represent is well conceived, and as a dramatic *motif* very effective. The former's imperious idealism and the latter's materialism lead, though by widely diverging roads, to the same result,—destruction. The one, finding himself unable to remodel society in accordance with the fervid vision of his soul, renounces it, and wages open war against it; the other, despising society as heartily, but bent upon selfish profit, takes advantage of its imperfections, directs his ignoble designs against individuals, and momentarily gains what he wishes. But the hand of Nemesis is lifted threateningly over the heads of both, and ruin overtakes them.

Extravagance in speech and gestures.

The fascination of the work its magnificent audacity.

Karl and Franz Moor compared.

Schiller had great difficulty in finding a publisher for his drama, and finally had to print it at his own expense. For this purpose he had to borrow money, one of his friends becoming surety for its

The publication of "The Robbers."

payment. This was the beginning of the pecuniary embarrassments which for so many years embittered his life. In the summer of 1781 "The Robbers" appeared, bearing the imprint of Frankfort and Leipsic. The sale was slow and unsatisfactory, and a large number of copies gradually accumulated on the author's hands.

Schiller's appointment as an army surgeon.

After his graduation Schiller had received an appointment as army surgeon, with a monthly salary of eighteen florins, or between seven and eight dollars in our money. The poet's family, who had expected some very tangible proof of the duke's favor in return for the son's obedience in abandoning the theological career, were painfully disappointed. The lucrative position which his highness promised was very conveniently forgotten, and no one was bold enough to assist a grand ducal memory. Instead of that the father wrote a high-flown epistle expressing his gratitude for the benefactions so abundantly bestowed upon his son, and the son kissed the benefactor's hand, and avowed himself for evermore his debtor. Karl Eugen most graciously received this evidence of his protégé's devotion, and no doubt felt a virtuous consciousness of having merited it.

Streicher's description of Schiller.

A vivid idea of Schiller's appearance at this time may be derived from a description by his friend, the musician Streicher, who saw him for the first time shortly before his dismissal from the academy. Streicher, with characteristic modesty, writes in the third person, indicating his own name merely by his initial. At one of the public exhibitions of the academy which Streicher happened to attend, Schiller was engaged in a Latin debate, on some medical subject, with one of the professors. "His reddish hair, his knock-kneed legs bent toward each other, the quick blinking of his eyes when he spoke with animation, his frequent smiles while speaking, but especially his finely modeled nose, and the deep, fearless eagle's glance which flashed forth from under his full, broadly

arched forehead, made an inextinguishable impression upon him [Streicher]. . . . .

Streicher's first acquaintance with Schiller.

"When, in 1781, 'The Robbers' had appeared in print, and had made an extraordinary impression, especially upon the younger generation, S. requested a musical friend who had been educated in the academy to make him acquainted with the poet. His desire was granted, and S. was surprised to recognize in the author of this drama the same youth whose first appearance had made such a profound impression upon him. . . . . A most expressive but unassuming countenance greeted the stranger with a friendly smile. His flattering address was answered deprecatingly, and with the most engaging modesty. In the conversation not a word which might have shocked the most sensitive nature. His views on all subjects, particularly on music and poetry, were quite new, unusual, convincing, and altogether natural. His utterances concerning the works of others were very striking, but still marked by forbearing delicacy, and never without proofs. In years he was a youth, but in intellect a mature man; and the listener was made to judge by his standard, which he applied to everything, and before which much that had hitherto appeared great shrank to small dimensions, and works which had been judged as commonplace gained greater significance. His face, which at first had been pale, but in the course of the conversation became more and more flushed, his sickly eyes, the hair pushed artlessly backwards, the dazzlingly white, bare neck, gave the poet an air of distinction, which contrasted as favorably with the conventional neatness of the rest of the company as his utterances had been exalted above theirs."

Schiller's manner of speaking and his literary judgments.

The publication of "The Robbers" was not without serious consequences to its author. The play had gradually made its way to public notice; reviews began to appear, both favorable and otherwise, some, it must be confessed,

written by Schiller himself, and a great enthusiasm for exalted criminals became rife in various parts of the empire. In 1781 the Baron von Dalberg, who at the time was the director of the theatre at Manheim, determined to bring it on the boards, and with this in view opened a correspondence with the author. Schiller accepted many of his suggestions, left out some obnoxious passages, and made many unimportant alterations, where the scenic effect seemed to demand it. When the day for the representation of the drama came, the poet could no longer restrain his impatience. His resolution was soon taken. He set out secretly for Manheim, omitting, of course, to obtain a furlough, witnessed with infinite satisfaction the triumph of his play, and took a jolly supper afterwards with the actors and actresses, to whom he owed, in part, his success. The next day he returned to Stuttgart, and reluctantly resumed his duties at the hospital. The uncongenial nature of his forced occupation weighed upon him like a nightmare. What wonder that, with his brain teeming with grand poetical projects, he found the daily routine of the parade and the hospital intolerably irksome! He became even more careless of his professional reputation, and all hope of building up a lucrative practice in the city was soon cut off. At a party which General Augé gave to the officers of his regiment, he drank an immoderate amount of wine, and had to be carried home to his lodgings. The report was eagerly spread through the city, and people began to look askance at him as a man of dissolute habits. The poet, however, though he may have indulged in occasional excesses, when the apparent hopelessness of his position made him despair of ever reaching the goal he had set himself, was never unfaithful to his better nature. It is true, as his friend Scharfenstein says of him, that if he had not become a great poet, he would have become a great man in active public

Baron von Dalberg applies for "The Robbers."

"The Robbers" on the stage.

Schiller's first visit to Manheim.

A bad reputation.

life, and his fate very likely would have been a fortress. For in a petty state like Würtemberg, men of his calibre were more feared than honored, and independence of opinion on political subjects was usually rewarded with imprisonment.

Schiller's "Anthology."

During this period of discontent, Schiller never forgot what he held to be the mission of his life. He wrote, although in a desultory fashion, and in the year after the publication of "The Robbers" collected his lyrics under the title, "The Anthology for the Year 1782." A few contributions from other writers were also included, but the bulk of the volume was made up of Schiller's own poems. The same contempt for the feeble conventionalism of the age, the same worship of uncurbed primeval strength, the same violence of thought and language, which had characterized "The Robbers," found renewed expression in these wild, heaven-scaling lyrics. They are not always pleasant reading, but they have a magnificent width of horizon, and often bewilder the sense by their wealth of crude and fantastic imagery. The spirit of Rousseau is predominant in most of them. There are occasional echoes of Klopstock, Schubart, and Bürger, but as a whole the tone and sentiment of the collection mark it as a product of the Storm and Stress school, of whose doctrines Schiller was, since the publication of his first drama, the principal enunciator.

Critical review of "The Anthology."

The poems addressed to Laura, which occupy a large part of the volume, afford a curious insight into Schiller's state of mind. Laura, by the way, is the fictitious name under which he celebrates his friend Frau Vischer, a young officer's widow, in whose house he lodged during his residence in Stuttgart. She was, according to all accounts, a merry and agreeable woman, who played moderately well on the piano, and possessed the faculty of entertaining her solitary lodger by her music and her spirited conversation. She had already

Schiller's relation to Laura.

passed her first youth, and although attractive in person could hardly be called beautiful. Schiller spent much of his time in her company, romped with her two small children, read his poems to her, and derived much encouragement from her enthusiastic admiration. Whether their relation was entirely Platonic is difficult to decide; one of Schiller's friends maintains that it was not, while those who knew him best assert that there was no ground for suspicion. Unfortunately Frau Vischer, after Schiller's departure, became involved in a love affair with a very young medical student, ran away with him, and ruined her reputation forever.

Was their relation a blameless one?

As a plump widow with two children, Laura was hardly a proper subject to inspire lyrical enthusiasm, and the device of making her a maiden, and endowing her with the most magnificent attributes of youth and beauty, was therefore a very pardonable poetic license. She was the first woman, outside of the poet's immediate family, with whom he had been intimately acquainted, and she thus very naturally became to him the representative of womanhood. In this capacity he burns incense to her, and offers her his fervid poetical homage. He summons sun and moon and stars to sing her praises; he searches the whole astronomical universe to find similes for her glorification. And yet, with all this ethereal remoteness, the diction has a strong sensuous coloring, bordering now and then on coarse voluptuousness. The key-note is the *Weltschmerz* (world-woe), a vague and restless melancholy, which dwells with morbid pleasure on the nocturnal phases of existence, and scornfully tramples upon the flowers which peep forth among the thorns on our earthly path. Schiller has himself fairly characterized these odes to Laura, when he says that they give evidence of an overstrained and untamable imagination, which veils its slippery tendencies in Platonic bombast. And yet this verdict, although not unjust, is in-

Laura in "The Anthology" worshiped as the representative of her sex

Morbid tendencies.

complete. If "The Anthology" is a failure, it is because the poet is embarrassed by the superabundance of his resources. As soon as he opens the floodgates of his imagination, the whole universe rushes in upon him, bewildering him by its infinite suggestiveness and infinite capacity of expression. In a failure like this there is more of promise than in a hundred cheap successes. Such mighty visions do not come, except to poets *par la grâce de Dieu.*

A magnificent failure.

In the mean while the catastrophe in Schiller's career was rapidly approaching, and a number of petty circumstances served to accelerate it. In May, 1782, a certain General Rieger, the commander of the fortress Hohenasperg, where Schubart was confined, died suddenly, and Schiller wrote a high-flown elegy on him, containing certain fierce allusions to princes in general, which might, without any great stretch of imagination, be interpreted as applying to the Duke of Würtemberg. Karl Eugen read this poem with great displeasure, but disdained to take any notice of it. Then again an obscure man of letters named Wredow, who had resided for a few years in the Canton Grison, in Switzerland, felt himself aggrieved at a certain uncomplimentary allusion to this canton in "The Robbers." This allusion was really nothing but an application of a Swabian proverb or popular tradition, and was, moreover, merely a half accidental remark of one of the robbers. Nevertheless a great ado was made about it. Another scribbler, a certain Dr. Arnstein, also took up the defense of the Grisons against Schiller's alleged accusation, and by the exertions of a man named Walter, an enemy of the poet's family, the affair finally reached the ears of the duke. His highness was greatly incensed. He summoned Schiller into his august presence and rebuked him as if he had been a school-boy of twelve, strictly forbidding him to have anything to do with foreign coun-

Schiller's elegy on General Rieger.

The indignation of the champion of the Grisons.

Karl Eugen rebukes Schiller.

tries, or to print anything which did not relate to his medical profession.

After this interview Schiller saw himself confronted with the alternative of either abandoning his literary pursuits or seeking refuge where the authority of Karl Eugen could not reach him. He knew his master too well to suppose that he would voluntarily relax his hold upon him. His father had, when he reluctantly sent him, at the duke's command, to the seminary, pledged him for life to the service of the Grand Ducal house of Würtemberg; he had, ere he had himself the opportunity to choose, accepted the duke's bounty, and the latter expected him literally to fulfill his obligations.

An unpleasant alternative.

While Schiller was debating this difficult problem, "The Robbers" was once more, under Dalberg's auspices, brought upon the boards in Manheim. The sorely harassed author could not resist the temptation to see the cherished creations of his fancy moving bodily before him; he needed a ray of joy to dissipate the gloom that was gathering about him. The Baroness von Wolzogen, a sincere believer in Schiller's genius and the mother of two young men who had been educated with him in the academy, had also expressed her desire to witness the performance, and Frau Vischer was only too willing to accompany her. Fortunately the duke was away on a journey. Schiller did not hesitate long. He feigned indisposition, in order that no hospital duty might be demanded of him during his absence. With his two friends he started in a carriage for Manheim, went to the theatre, and was intoxicated with delight at the brilliant success of his drama. But on their return the ladies found it hard to preserve the secrecy in regard to this affair which they had so solemnly promised. They confided it to one or two particular friends, who were likewise sworn to secrecy; and thus, within a few days, General Augé and the duke were duly informed, and the delinquent was once more summoned to an audi-

Schiller's second visit to Manheim.

ence. His highness, on this occasion, was furious and used very energetic language. He repeated his former commands: no communication with foreign countries, by which he understood all the world outside of Würtemberg, and no printing of comedies and "that kind of stuff." On a former occasion he had been more liberal, having offered the poet the benefit of his own criticism, which the latter was ungrateful enough never to avail himself of. Strong hints were dropped that in case he failed to obey, extreme measures would be resorted to. And Schiller knew from Schubart's example only too well what that meant. The interview closed; as a punishment for his transgression the poet had to endure a fortnight's arrest.

Karl Eugen again rebukes Schiller, and orders him to be arrested.

After his release Schiller was firmly resolved to endure no longer the annoyance to which the duke's interference in his personal affairs subjected him. The success of "The Robbers" in Manheim had made his name favorably known throughout Germany. Was it not reasonable, then, to hope that, if he could obtain the liberty to devote himself entirely to literary pursuits, he might easily succeed in gaining a modest livelihood? A new tragedy, "Fiesco," was already far advanced, and, if Streicher's verdict was at all to be trusted, would be sure to increase his fame as a dramatist. Feeling confident that it was a much maturer work than "The Robbers," he had little doubt that it would be accepted by Dalberg for his theatre, and the sum which he expected to realize from it would then maintain him comfortably until the completion of a third drama should have opened new resources. Animated by this hope, he appealed to Dalberg to intercede in his favor with the duke, and obtain the latter's permission for him to take up his residence outside of Würtemberg. But Dalberg was too much of a courtier to risk the displeasure of a mighty prince for the sake of befriending a poor and obscure poet.

Schiller's fame spreading.

His appeal to Dalberg.

Schiller's position, however, was with every day becoming more problematic. He began to fear for his safety. Nevertheless, he made one more attempt to conciliate his officious master. He addressed a humble letter to him, begging his permission to continue his literary pursuits, principally as a means of increasing his slender income. The duke refused to read this letter, and informed the poet, through one of his subordinates, that if he dared to address another communication to him of a private character, he would be punished with another arrest. Schiller was now convinced that a reconciliation was impossible; his only safety was in flight. His faithful friend, Streicher, placed his own meagre purse at his disposal, and they prepared to flee together. Streicher intended to go to Hamburg, where he would prosecute his musical studies. A favorable opportunity was soon to present itself. About the middle of September, 1782, the Grand Duke Paul of Russia, with his wife, was expected on a visit to Stuttgart, and great preparations were made for their reception. The day arrived, and the exalted pair made their appearance. Amid the tumult of the festivities, the poet and his friend escaped unnoticed, and arrived September 19, 1782, in Manheim. Now he had at last gained the liberty he had so long and ardently desired. But fresh disappointments were in store for him. The tragedy of "Fiesco," on which his whole future seemed to depend, did not please the actors in Manheim. They appeared even to question whether the same man who professed to have written "Fiesco" could actually be the author of "The Robbers." The manager, Meyer, however, after having read the manuscript by himself, changed his opinion, and coincided with Schiller in pronouncing the second drama superior to the first.

Another attempt to conciliate the duke.

The visit of the Russian Grand Duke to Stuttgart.

Schiller's flight with Streicher.

In the mean while the slender means of the two friends were rapidly being consumed, and no new resources opened themselves to them. Under such circumstances it would be

imprudent to cut off one's retreat. Schiller, therefore, after a severe struggle with his pride, once more addressed the duke, repeating his former request. An answer came offering him pardon for his transgression in leaving without a furlough, but taking no notice of his request. He was too proud to return on such conditions. In Manheim, however, it was not safe for him to remain. It was not improbable that the duke might demand his surrender as a deserter, and in that case he knew the fate that awaited him. Accompanied by Streicher, he continued his journey on foot to Darmstadt, and thence to Frankfort. Negotiations with Dalberg and Meyer were actively carried on, and the result was that "Fiesco" was pronounced unfit for the stage in its present form, and returned to the poet to be shortened and otherwise modified.

Poverty and embarrassment.

Amid all his distress, and the hardships of poverty and exile, Schiller never lost sight of his poetical plans. He labored unweariedly, now on the remodeling of "Fiesco," now on his new drama, "Louise Millerin," afterwards published under the title "Kabale und Liebe" ("Love and Intrigue"). The report of the magnificent success of "The Robbers" in Leipsic and Hamburg inspired him with increased confidence in his future, and soon Berlin was to be added to the long list of his triumphs. By the advice of his friends in Manheim he took up his residence temporarily, under the assumed name of Dr. Schmidt, in the village of Oggersheim, where Streicher, as usual, bore him company. In the first days of November "Fiesco," in its new form, was finally completed and dispatched to Dalberg. After a delay of several weeks, the laconic answer was received that the drama was unfit for the stage, and that accordingly nothing could be paid for it. This was a great blow to Schiller. How was he now to compensate Streicher for all the sacrifices which he

"Fiesco" remodeled and "Love and Intrigue" begun.

"Fiesco" rejected by Dalberg

had voluntarily imposed upon himself for his friend's sake? Streicher had intended to go to Hamburg to study music, but having spent all his money in maintaining Schiller, he was now obliged to remain in Manheim. "Fiesco" was finally sold to the bookseller Schwan for the modest sum of one louis d'or per printed sheet.

But published by Schwan.

Having been offered a place of refuge by Frau von Wolzogen on her estate Bauerbach, near Meiningen, he separated from the faithful Streicher and arrived December 7, 1782, in his new home.

Arrival of Schiller in Bauerbach.

III.

IN "Fiesco" Schiller enters the field in which he was to gain his fairest laurels, — that of the historical drama.

The drama probably suggested by a hint in Rousseau's writings.

A hint of Rousseau had suggested the theme to him. Speaking of Plutarch Rousseau makes the following remark: "He has written such glorious biographies because he selected no men of mere moderate greatness, but grand, virtuous, and exalted criminals. In modern history there is one man who deserved to be portrayed by his brush, — Fiesco."

Schiller depicts a republic which has outlived its republicanism, a state in which republicanism of the stern old Roman

Genoa under the Dorias.

type was no longer possible. Genoa, at the time when Fiesco lived, was a republic only in name; Andrea Doria and his nephew Gianettino were its actual rulers. Fiesco, actuated by very complex motives, partly by patriotism, partly by personal ambition, resolves to deliver his country from the power of the tyrants. In order to avert suspicion, he plays the part of a thoughtless liber-

Fiesco and Julia Doria.

tine, neglects his young wife Leonora, and pays his court to a coarse and imperious coquette, Julia Doria, the niece of Andrea. But Fiesco, no doubt, after having tasted the forbidden fruit finds it attractive; and we begin to suspect that Leonora's fears are not entirely groundless. Before any mischief is done, however, he discovers the depravity of Julia's character; her attempt to poison his wife rouses him violently from his dreams. Nevertheless, as his plans are not yet ripe, he is forced to persevere in his attentions to her, lest a sudden change in his conduct should put Gianettino on his guard.

The attributes with which Schiller endows the other members of the conspiracy indicate plainly that he was from the beginning fully conscious of the nature of his problem; he did not base its tragic solution upon any intrigue, which accidentally thwarted the conspiracy, but derived it as a logical necessity from the characters of the conspirators themselves. One is described as an ordinary man, who hopes by the overthrow of the present government to rid himself of his creditors; another as a lean libertine, who takes advantage of Fiesco's neglect of his wife, and attempts to seduce her in her husband's absence. Out of such material no stable republican government could be fashioned. Only the youth Bourgagnino, and the old Verrina, who both have a personal grievance to avenge, remotely approach the Roman type of republicans with which Plutarch has made us familiar. Taking all this into consideration one cannot help regretting that Dalberg forced the poet to omit the tragic conclusion in the edition he prepared for the stage, making Fiesco in the last moment renounce the crown of the Doge, which the senators offer him, and prefer to be the first citizen in a free and happy republic. We are not prepared for such exalted sentiments in a man, the gold of whose nature has so large an admixture of common clay. It is a violation both of historic and of poetical reality.

"Fiesco" not a drama of intrigue.

The character of the conspirators.

The tragic conclusion omitted in the stage edition of "Fiesco."

As a type of the violent, full-blooded, and energetic noble of the Italian Renaissance, Fiesco is truly admirable. He is a supple, beautiful animal, whom it would be unfair to judge by the moral standards of our own century. Under the gloss of his splendid, polished exterior slumber all the ferocious instincts of the primitive man. From his childhood he has breathed the dagger and poison atmosphere of the sixteenth century; no wonder that human life is not very precious to him. With relentless perseverance he pursues his aim, and is naturally not

The character of Fiesco.

very squeamish in the choice of his means. No moral scruples keep him awake at night; if his conspiracy had succeeded, and Fate had allowed him to survive the murders for which he is directly or indirectly responsible, he would, no doubt, have gone to bed with an easy conscience, and slept the sleep of the just. Rousseau calls him a grand, virtuous, and exalted criminal, and very likely from Rousseau's point of view these adjectives appeared justifiable. For with all his hypocrisy and double dealing, Fiesco could hardly be called a mean man. He is not destitute of magnanimity, and he shrinks from taking unfair advantages. When Andrea Doria, trusting in his chivalric honor, dismisses the guards before his palace, after the Moor has revealed to him the conspiracy, Fiesco's first impulse is to rush to him and lay his life in his hand. He is indignant at the thought of being outdone by his enemy in magnanimity. And yet this same man, at another time, having his ambitious plot apparently more at heart than his own honor, continues his friendly relations with Calcagna after the latter has insulted his wife. This complexity of Fiesco's character, the intimate psychological coherence between its noble and its ignoble traits, shows how intelligently Schiller has studied the Italian Renaissance, and how correctly he has grasped its spirit. There are, however, even in this drama, passages which recall the youthful visionary who in "The Robbers" had proclaimed his fierce rebellion against civilized society. The language is occasionally needlessly coarse and violent, as, for instance, where Verrina swears "by all the horrors of eternity that if he had been stupid enough not to recognize him [Fiesco] as a rogue, he would twist a cord out of his own bowels and throttle himself with it, so that his departing soul should bespatter Fiesco with its gouty foam bubbles."

"A virtuous and exalted criminal."

Violent diction.

On the other hand, there is an abundance of brilliant antitheses and brief incisive epigrams: "To conquer a diadem

is great," says Fiesco; "to throw it away is divine." "The shame decreases with the magnitude of the sin." "Since powder was invented, the angels no more wage war," etc.

Epigrammatic quotations.

It is an excellent touch, too, where Leonora, in the presence of the ladies of her bed-chamber, breaks out in passionate accusations against her husband, whose flirtation with the Countess Doria has been carried on before her very eyes. It is all the while her hope that they will contradict her, and when one of them, Rosa, sympathizes with her, she turns furiously on her, calling her a poisonous slanderer. The scenes are all constructed with boldness and breadth of design, as if on a colossal scale. What can be finer, for instance, than Fiesco's soliloquy in the third act, where from his balcony he beholds the city, the harbor, and the distant ocean, flushing with the first touch of the "rosy-fingered dawn;" or the following scene, where Leonora requests Fiesco to send her home to her mother; or the scene in the fifth act, where Fiesco comes in the night to warn his enemy, the doge, against himself? All these scenes impress themselves indelibly upon the memory, and prove Schiller's title to be counted among the foremost dramatists of the world.

The most impressive scene in "Fiesco."

Schiller remained at Bauerbach from December, 1782, till July, 1783. He had as yet no assurance that the Duke of Würtemberg would not demand his surrender as soon as he should ascertain his whereabouts, and was obliged, therefore, to conceal his real name. He was known in Bauerbach by the name of Dr. Ritter. During the dreary winter months he labored unweariedly on his new drama, "Louise Millerin," and made his preliminary studies for "Don Carlos." He found a staunch and valuable friend in a librarian named Reinwald, who afterwards married his eldest sister, Christophine. Frau von Wolzogen and her daughter Lotte paid occasional visits to the estate, and the charms of the latter the poet's suscepti-

Schiller's sojourn at Bauerbach.

ble heart could not long resist. His condition during this period is difficult to comprehend. One is tempted to believe that he identified himself with every one of his tragic heroes, and unconsciously acted their parts. He is continually drifting from one extreme emotion into another, always in a fever of transport or in the depth of despair. It is well to bear in mind that the century itself was abnormally emotional, and that it was rather the fashion to go into hysterics on very slight provocation; and the characteristics of the age were naturally reflected, with increased intensity, in its representative poet. I do not mean to assert that Schiller was insincere, that he was actually playing a part; but with his native inflammability and his taste for vehement language, he involuntarily intensified his own sensations, and gave them, perhaps, a somewhat hyperbolical expression. He instinctively dramatized every situation that chance threw in his way, and even a passing sentiment, as soon as it came to be expressed, immediately moved with the imposing tread of stately heroics. This hyperbolical tendency is inherent in the poetical temperament, and must serve to explain the apparent ease and rapidity with which Schiller conquered passions, upon which, judging by his own language, you would have supposed he was resolved to stake the very last drop of his blood.

The emotional extravagance of the eighteenth century reflected in Schiller.

For a lover his position certainly was unenviable. Being for the time dependent upon Frau von Wolzogen for his very subsistence, how could he, without sacrificing his honest pride, present himself as a suitor for her daughter's hand? He had, before his departure from Stuttgart, observed certain symptoms in Lotte which had led him to believe that her heart belonged to him. Now this illusion which he had cherished with such rapture was rudely dispelled. The mother was forced to inform him (introducing as irrefutable evidence the daughter's secret journal) that the happy possessor of Lotte's

Schiller's love for Lotte von Wolzogen.

affections was a certain Herr von Winckelmann, for whom Schiller entertained a very hearty dislike. Many complications followed, during all of which Schiller bore himself nobly. When Lotte's brother, Wilhelm von Wolzogen, suspecting Winckelmann's inclination for his sister, wrote to Schiller, asking him for his candid opinion of his rival, the poet responded in a manner which does honor both to his heart and to his judgment. That, in spite of this, he was often wild with jealousy, distrust, and wounded pride is in no wise to his discredit.

IV.

WE have seen that Schiller had repeatedly appealed to the Baron von Dalberg for aid in the embarrassments which were still persistently pursuing him. That shrewd courtier, divining that Schiller some day might be very valuable to him, but nevertheless fearing to assume any responsibility, had always, in vague terms, expressed his faith in his poetic genius, but had refused to give any tangible proof of his professed confidence in the poet's future. Schiller had at last lost his patience, and had ceased to attach any significance to Dalberg's promises and prophecies. In the mean while the edition of "Fiesco," published by Schwan, had had a rapid sale, and found much favor with the public; and as the poet now showed no inclination to approach the baron as a petitioner, the baron was obliged to come to the poet. Dalberg accordingly reopened his negotiations. He promised to bring out "Fiesco" on his stage, and was especially anxious to secure the new drama, "Love and Intrigue." The result was that Schiller, after having hesitated long, and feeling especially reluctant to leave his friends at Bauerbach, returned to Manheim, where he was joyfully received by his devoted friend and worshiper, Streicher. He soon perceived by Dalberg's conduct toward him that his star must be in the ascendency. He was frequently invited to dine at the nobleman's table. "The Robbers" was again played at the theatre, as if in honor of his return, and finally he was offered a position as theatrical poet, with an annual salary of three hundred florins, or about one hundred

Dalberg's diplomatic attitude toward Schiller.

Schiller's return to Manheim,

and employment as poet of the theatre.

and seventy dollars. In return for this he was to write at least three dramas a year, which were to be first represented on the Manheim stage. From each he was to have one benefit, and, moreover, the right to make whatever arrangements he chose for their later publication. The copyright was thus secured to him. The contract was a preliminary one, concluded for but one year.

Unfortunately Schiller's energy, at this time, received a severe check. The country about Manheim was malarious, and during the hot summer of 1783 a malignant epidemic fever broke out, attacking about half the inhabitants, and causing the death of many. Schiller, feeling the malaria in his system, kept it at bay with Peruvian bark, of which he consumed very large quantities. Nevertheless he had to yield to the disease, which for several weeks unfitted him for intellectual labor; but even after his apparent recovery the symptoms lingered, though in a milder form, and the practice of eating quinine had to be continued. One can hardly conceive any very high respect for Schiller's medical attainments, when one sees how recklessly he maltreated his own health.

Schiller's illness.

One of the most prominent citizens in Manheim was the book-seller Schwan, a man of varied experience and considerable culture. He had since Schiller's first flight from Würtemberg taken a lively interest in his affairs, had opened to him his hospitable house, and profited much by the publication of his writings. Schwan had a very beautiful daughter, Margaret, who is said not to have been quite indifferent to Schiller. She had a fine figure, large, expressive eyes, and a well-modeled face; her conversation was animated, and her manner marked by an ease and grace which must have made her a very impressive phenomenon in the eyes of the inexperienced poet. From his correspondence with Frau von Wolzogen it is easy to perceive that he was doing his best to fall in love with her, but, as it appears, with indif-

The book-seller Schwan.

Margaret Schwan.

ferent success. The thought of Lotte still vaguely haunted him, and he could not quite dismiss the hope of winning her love, as long as there was no absolute proof that she had given it to another. He hints at this in a letter to the mother, then ridicules himself for his boldness; and receiving, probably, no encouragement, he was forced to drop the topic. Very likely he was weary of his unsettled Bohemian existence, and yearned for domestic felicity and a home, however humble, which he might call his own. In spite of the uncertainty of his position, his financial embarrassments, and his poor health, the question of matrimony was at this time continually agitating him, and his fancy wandered from the one maiden to the other, without being able to fix itself definitely upon either. In reality, it was neither Lotte nor Margaret, but matrimony, which he loved.

The matrimonial problem.

"Fiesco," in the mean while, was making a triumphal march through the cities of Germany, and was everywhere received with enthusiasm. In Berlin especially it was brought out with great magnificence in costume and scenery, and made a deep impression. In Frankfort and Vienna it also proved a great success. In Manheim it was brought upon the boards in the miserably mutilated edition which Schiller, at Dalberg's request, had reluctantly prepared. The public of the small town, however, were too provincial, too bound up in their narrow domestic cares, to comprehend a play of such grand design and with such a wide horizon. It must be borne in mind that outside of the great capitals there was no political life in Germany in the eighteenth century, and the Philistine *bourgeoisie*, which always compose the majority of a theatrical public, naturally found the lachrymose family dramas of Iffland and Kotzebue, with their petty intrigues, much more to their taste than the restless, defiant, and stimulating sentiment of a poet like Schiller. The former touched their own lives closely, the latter not even remotely.

"Fiesco" on the stage.

"Fiesco" in Manheim.

Shortly after his arrival in Manheim, Schiller had read his unprinted drama, "Louise Millerin," afterwards named by Iffland "Love and Intrigue," to a select circle in Schwan's house, and had felt much encouraged by the favor with which it was received. In April, 1784, it was brought on the stage, and shortly afterwards published by Schwan. It was republished during the same year, in an edition of "Tragedies by Schiller," and new editions were brought out during each of the two following years.

"Love and Intrigue."

In "Love and Intrigue" Schiller temporarily leaves the field of the historical tragedy, and descends into that of domestic life. And yet, in a deeper sense, "Love and Intrigue" is no less an historical drama than "Fiesco" or "Don Carlos." It is the grand social problems of the age which he strives to seize, and these he could clothe no less effectively in a fictitious tale of domestic complications than in the ambitious plottings of political malcontents. And he grasps every problem largely, makes it the bearer of his noblest thought, and thus dignifies the meanest theme into a symbol of exalted sentiment. Schiller's senses were of an exquisite fineness; they enabled him to feel all the impalpable influences of his century, the ideas yet disembodied and unformulated, which were hovering in the air, vaguely agitating the spiritual atmosphere. Thus, through "Love and Intrigue" trembles a foreboding sense of the French Revolution. The whole drama is in itself a most pronounced revolutionary manifesto, and the French National Assembly was not far wrong when it accorded to its author the diploma of citizenship in the French republic.

The historic tragedy and the family drama.

"Love and Intrigue" a prelude to the French Revolution.

"Love and Intrigue" is a very warm-blooded production; its pulse-beat is youthful and vigorous. The poet is not yet too cultivated to love, and especially to hate, with superb intensity. The indignities to which he has himself

been subjected, the injustice he has suffered, make his blood boil while he writes, and lend fervor to his speech. Some of the characters, Streicher tells us, and the whole deplorable social condition which the play depicts, are copied, with minute accuracy, from the court and the official world of Stuttgart. Such a statement sounds almost incredible, and makes one wonder that the revolution of 1789 did not break out in Germany, rather than in France. The plot is briefly as follows: A humble musician, Miller, has a beautiful daughter, Louise, who is loved by a young nobleman, Ferdinand von Walter, the son of the prime minister. Wurm, the premier's secretary, and an accomplice in many of the criminal acts by which he has attained his eminence, has also designs on Louise, but fails to gain her favor. As a revenge, he reveals to the minister, Von Walter, that his son intends to marry her. The father hopes it is merely a *liaison*, to which he has no objection. Wurm, however, succeeds in convincing him that the son is in earnest. The father, to escape the trouble of persuading Ferdinand, announces in the city his son's engagement to Lady Milford, the prince's mistress. A violent scene between father and son follows, in which the latter indignantly refuses to compromise his honor at his father's command. Nevertheless Ferdinand calls upon Lady Milford, and in order to make an engagement between them impossible insults her. The effect, however, is unforeseen. The lady, who loves him, and has long yearned to begin a new and pure life with him, is not incensed at the severe truths which he tells her; she only insists upon presenting her side of the picture. She gives him a glimpse into her past, sketches briefly the story of her life, and full of remorse he retracts his hasty judgment. He then informs her of his love for Louise, the musician's daughter.

The social condition copied from reality.

The plot of "Love and Intrigue."

Ferdinand and Lady Milford.

In the third act the old Von Walter surprises his son in

Miller's house. He brings with him police officers to arrest Louise. Ferdinand defends her, and draws his sword against his father. The latter, however, is determined to have his will executed, and persists in his design, until Ferdinand whispers a word in his ear which instantly brings him to terms. He evidently threatens to divulge certain important state secrets connected with the premier's career. Wurm and the premier now lay a counterplot, which is worthy of their distinguished statesmanship. They arrest Miller, on some pretext; represent to his daughter, who adores her father, that he will be tried for his life, for having insulted the majesty of the prince in the person of his representative, Von Walter. If she will write a letter, at Wurm's dictation, to Marshal von Kalb, a well-known libertine, she will thereby save her father's life. After a terrible struggle, Louise consents, having sworn that she will never explain the circumstances under which the letter was written. The letter, of course, was intended to compromise her honor in the eyes of her lover. It is dropped by a deliberate accident by Von Kalb in Ferdinand's presence. He picks it up, recognizes Louise's handwriting, and reads it. He hastens to her, demands an explanation, but, faithful to her oath, she reveals nothing. Other circumstances are ingeniously contrived to strengthen his suspicion; she confesses that the writing is hers; he believes her guilty. In the last scene he poisons himself and her, and dying she breaks her silence and reveals the plot. The father and Wurm arrive a moment before Ferdinand's death, and attack each other with mutual recriminations. Wurm threatens disclosures; and the premier, broken in spirit by the loss of him who was to reap the fruit of all his ambitious and dubious intrigues, voluntarily surrenders himself to justice.

The intrigues of Wurm and Von Walter.

The results of the plot.

Death of Ferdinand and Louise.

There is nothing very extraordinary in this plot; but its progress is superbly coherent, breathless, and genuinely

dramatic. The poet, to use a rude metaphor, button-holes you in the first act; you are instinctively aware that he has something wonderful to relate; and he holds you spell-bound till the curtain falls. Almost all the characters have decided and artistically vigorous personalities. The musician Miller is especially admirable: a plain and uncouth man, with a rough exterior, a good deal of grotesque humor, and withal a rigid sense of honor and a tender heart. Schiller has never before, or since, created a figure so typical, and at the same time so individual. In fact, Shaksperean touches of daring and convincing realism are by no means infrequent in this, as in all of Schiller's early dramas; but with every year, as after his acquaintance with Goethe the Greek ideal began to dawn upon his horizon, they became rarer and rarer.

The merits of the plot; its dramatic coherence.

Lady Milford, who sacrifices her honor for the sake of restraining the brutal prince from maltreating his subjects, was, no doubt, suggested by Franzisca von Hohenheim, whose influence over the Duke of Würtemberg was frequently utilized for similar purposes. Nevertheless, Lady Milford is the least intelligible character in the drama. The noble motive and the ignoble deed appear to be running side by side in her, like swift separate currents in the same stream; they do not mingle; they seem, in fact, to have little to do with each other. Such a relation is by no means an impossibility; but to make it clear and vividly present, a much subtler treatment was required than the poet has here accorded to it.

The character of Lady Milford.

Louise and Ferdinand are continually laboring under such an excitement that one is at a loss to conjecture how they would act if the strain were removed. Their conversations consist of magniloquent tirades, and their sentiment borders on sentimentality. Had they been Greeks or Romans, or even mediæval lovers of historic renown, we should probably not have taken offense at their extravagant phraseology; but the tragic cothurn is a sorry

Louise and Ferdinand.

substitute for a modern gaiter, and is, moreover, glaringly out of keeping with the rest of the costume.

Ferdinand is a generous youth, of average talent and average morality. As an officer he is bound to make a career; but a marriage with a maiden of the lower classes would be a fatal check to his ambition. Nevertheless he has the courage to obey the voice of his heart; he determines to marry Louise. On the other hand, his conscience is not sensitive enough to be seriously disturbed at his father's villainy, of which he has full knowledge.

Palleske's characterization of Louise.

Of Louise, Palleske[1] gives the following excellent characterization, which I prefer to quote:—

"In such a world the individual is bound to his station, and that is the tragic fate of Louise. She lives in fear of the world: fear of her own love for Ferdinand; fear of a future judgment; fear of incalculable attacks on her life, liberty, and innocence. . . . . Her anxious piety, her touching and indeed so intelligible devotion for her father, all these limitations make her fate a necessity. A veil of mourning rests upon all she says. Heroic liberty of action which befits a Juliet is made impossible to this girl by her birth in the *bourgeoisie;* she is the crushed heart of the German people; she has only the liberty to perish, not the courage to be happy. Of guilt there can be no question in this case: her anxiety, her filial devotion, are her whole guilt; her virtue, her love for her father, become her ruin. Whoever knows thoroughly the *bourgeoisie*, which is just beginning to recover from these wounds, will admit that this character is drawn with terrible truthfulness. Even her defective culture is a trait which could not be spared, for at that point *naïveté* ceases."

Her tragic fate is her birth in the *bourgeoisie.*

Schiller's villains are, as usual, of the dark and sinister

[1] *Schiller's Leben und Werke.* Von Emil Palleske. Erster Band, pp. 441, 442. Stuttgart, 1877.

type. In the portrait of Wurm there is not a single redeeming trait; he is cold and shrewd, and at the same time coarse and ugly and brutal. Shakspere, I am inclined to think, if he had retained the former characteristics, would have rejected the latter. He would have made him smooth and polished of speech, subtile and agile, and would have thrown over all his actions a certain worldly grace, which would have given a charm even to his iniquity. The premier, Von Walter, too, is a crudely-constructed villain. Human character, especially when it is evil, is a more composite product; very few actions are either wholly noble or wholly the reverse. A multitude of intertangled motives, half selfish and half generous, are apt to lie at the root of every deed which the world recognizes as bad. And the badness which is thus interwoven with streaks of perhaps misconceived generosity is far more credible, far more humanly interesting, than the sinister plottings of an incarnate demon. To be sure, Von Walter asserts that he has committed his crimes in order to make the road to eminence smooth and easy for his son; but we are hardly disposed to believe him. For in offering his son's hand to the duke's mistress, he sacrifices, without compunction, Ferdinand's honor for the sake of maintaining himself in power. It is his own, rather than Ferdinand's welfare, which he wishes to secure by this nefarious alliance. That Schiller had known characters at the grand ducal court in Stuttgart externally resembling Von Walter is not unlikely; but if he had known their soul-histories as well as he knew the intrigues and deeds of violence by which they had risen to power, he would have introduced finer reliefs and more delicate gradations of color into his portraits, and in the end produced a less glaring but more truthful result.

Wurm.

Von Walter.

Strength of characterization, but lack of delicacy.

That nevertheless the drama, as a whole, was built on the firm basis of reality is evident from the fact that after one or two representations it was excluded from the stage in Stutt-

gart. The Von Walters and Wurms in the parquet felt insulted, and complained to the duke, who censured the manager, and henceforth forbade the appearance of the play in the *repertoire*. Schiller's father writes to him that he is obliged to make a secret of the fact that he has a copy of "Love and Intrigue" in his house, as, on account of certain passages in the tragedy, it would be dangerous to let any one suspect that he liked it. In Frankfort it was played April 13, 1784, and in Manheim two days later. The cast in the latter place was especially successful; at the end of the second act all the spectators, as with one accord, rose and broke out into a storm of applause. This triumph was profoundly gratifying to Schiller.

"Love and Intrigue" on the stage.

"He was so surprised," says Streicher, "that he arose and bowed to the public. In his air, and in his proud and noble bearing, there was a consciousness of having done justice to himself, as well as satisfaction at seeing his merits recognized and rewarded with distinction."

"Love and Intrigue," like his two previous dramas, was published by Schwan. It was dedicated to Dalberg, with a long formula, expressive of humility, gratitude, and esteem. French, English, and Italian translations have since appeared.

Publication of "Love and Intrigue" by Schwan

V.

SCHILLER'S position in Manheim was by no means secure. Dalberg had expected him to manufacture his three dramas annually in rapid succession, and thereby help to fill the theatrical treasury. Schiller's slow, painstaking conscientiousness he was unable to comprehend, and when at the end of the year the third drama, "Don Carlos," the subject of which he had himself been gracious enough to suggest, was far from completion, the baron lost his patience. He was too diplomatic, however, to give free vent to his dissatisfaction, while in a hundred equivocal ways he allowed the poet to conjecture that he need not count on a renewal of their contract. Schiller, wishing to be spared the humiliation of a formal dismissal, anticipated the baron's decision, and in November, 1784, tendered his resignation, which was promptly accepted. He was by this time fully aware that he had made a mistake in connnecting himself with a provincial theatre. He had too high a conception of his mission to appeal to the fleeting taste of the moment; conventional foibles and local prejudices he profoundly ignored, except in so far as he found them effective in the characterization of the society which he was depicting. The creative passion, which burned with a pure flame within him, demanded a noble and lofty utterance, and if this utterance failed to please the multitude, the fault was the multitude's, and not his. Who doubts that Schiller, if he had been willing to make a compromise with his better self, could easily have produced three stirring plays, full of melodramatic sentiment, noisy declama-

Dalberg's dissatisfaction with Schiller.

Schiller resigns his position as poet of the Manheim theatre.

tion, and cheap incidents, — plays that would have filled Dalberg with enthusiasm, and the theatrical treasury with coin? Any practiced writer who has tried it knows how easy it is to compose tremendous tales of love and crime and adventure, of the style that is represented by our third and fourth rate periodicals, and every literature has instances to show of authors, born for better things, who have been unable to resist the temptation to respond to these cruder demands of the public. Doubtless Schiller knew well what the Manheimers admired; he had already, in his "Love and Intrigue," beaten Iffland in his chosen field, the domestic drama. Why did he not, then, like Iffland, continue to work this vein, which had once yielded him such rich returns? Undoubtedly because success, however ardently desired, was with him a mere secondary consideration. He preferred to remain faithful to his lofty calling. He had an inspiring consciousness of laboring for posterity, and a compromise with mammon would have degraded him in his own eyes.

He disdains to appeal to the degraded taste of his public.

"Goethe," says Julian Schmidt,[1] "dismissed his poems as soon as they had eased his mind; Schiller, who, while he wrote, almost regularly was struck with astonishment at the greatness of his work, was no sooner done with it than he began to criticise, and the work which but a short while ago had aroused his admiration soon began to trouble him, and at last he almost hated it. Still he never, or very rarely, lost his courage, but in the proud consciousness of his new-won culture he believed himself capable of the greatest achievements, even though he condemned all that he had previously done."

Goethe's and Schiller's attitude toward their own works.

This critical attitude toward his own productions always remained characteristic of Schiller. Each succeeding work was merely a step by which he mounted toward higher pos-

[1] Julian Schmidt: *Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur seit Lessing's Tod.* Erster Band, p. 305.

sibilties. All his external life went only to feed the inner flame, which was slowly and imperceptibly consuming him.

General characteristics of Schiller's style.

Whatever he touches is instantly dignified, transfigured. A trivial incident, when translated into the exalted imagery of his speech, gains a colossal significance, and moves with majestic grace. His thought marches to a mighty music, and forces whatever comes in its way to keep step to the same large, vigorous rhythm. The tyranny and oppression of his childhood, his perishable loves, and even his financial embarrassments, are all lifted above the accidents of time and place; when transfused with his spirit, they become eternal symbols, and mankind accepts them as such, and draws comfort and courage from them.

Schiller's youthful love affairs had been as shallow and evanescent as such affairs are apt to be. Even Charlotte von Wolzogen had hardly touched his deeper nature; and still less Margaret Schwan. The time was not distant, however, when a real passion was to invade his life. In May,

Charlotte von Kalb.

1784, Charlotte von Kalb, *née* Ostheim, arrived in Manheim. She had been forced by her relatives to marry a nobleman, Major von Kalb, whom she had never professed to love. She was a woman of extraordinary intelligence and culture, full of *esprit*, and of a very romantic temperament. She was, moreover, twenty-three

Her character and early history.

years old, very beautiful, graceful, and impressible. Sorrow had pursued her from her earliest years: her parents had died while she was yet a child, and her only brother had lately been killed in a duel, which, again, led to her enforced marriage with Von Kalb, as the extensive estates might otherwise go out of the family. She had read much and dreamed much, no doubt, of ideal men and an ideal life, but reality had laid its hard yoke upon her shoulders, and bidden her abandon her cherished dreams. She was too young and warm-blooded and beautiful to be a stoic, and the cynicism of middle-aged dowagers in high life was yet too remote from her. She felt

that Nature had meant her for something better than Fate had made her, and her whole soul was filled with a passionate hunger for happiness.

Schiller's first acquaintance with Frau von Kalb.

Frau von Wolzogen had recommended Frau von Kalb to make Schiller's acquaintance, and to facilitate the process had given her some message or present to the poet. His appearance immediately impressed her. He accompanied her to the theatre, took her to the museum of antique sculptures, and thus æsthetic topics were naturally introduced in their conversation. Her intelligent appreciation, her enthusiasm, and her fiery eloquence filled him with admiration. He found himself for the first time face to face with a woman who by an instinctive gift of sympathy caught his thought even before it was uttered, — a woman who was capable of comprehending whatever was noblest and best in him, and interpreting largely the aspiration that dignified both the failures and the triumphs of his past.

Growing intimacy between them.

Charlotte von Kalb left Manheim with her husband, who was stationed in the garrison of Landau, but soon returned to the city alone, as her presence in a garrison was not thought proper. Schiller felt irresistibly drawn toward her, and continued to associate freely with her. A relation of intimate friendship, intensified by a mutual unconfessed feeling of a more dangerous kind, soon developed between them. Charlotte, who like most ladies of the eighteenth century kept a diary, has preserved to us a very vivid picture of these first meetings. Schiller brought his poems, and read them aloud, and finally also the unfinished manuscript of "Don Carlos." To his utter astonishment she remained silent when he had finished reading. At last, feeling that she must say something, she frankly exclaimed: "That is the poorest thing you have ever written!" Schiller, full of impatience, flung the manuscript on the table, saying, "That is too much!" (*Das ist zu arg!*) and left the room. It was not the first time he had

spoiled the impression of his best works by his loud and violently declamatory manner of reading. He had had a similar experience with "Fiesco," when he read it to the actors in Meyer's house. When Charlotte had yielded to the temptation of looking into the manuscript, she soon revised her judgment, and hastened to communicate to the author her recantation.

The dinners at Major von Kalb's.

Major von Kalb made frequent visits to his wife in Mannheim, and on such occasions often brought with him his friend Major Hugo. Merry little dinners were then given, to which Schiller was invariably invited. Champagne, rare viands, and brilliant conversation combined to make these little gatherings memorable. In Charlotte's diary they are faithfully described, and specimens of the conversation (mostly high-flown and sentimental) are given. Schiller's presence was to her like "a mild radiance which brightens the twilight." It was not his fame which had taken her heart captive; she saw in him a rich and noble personality, devoted to high aims, full of Titanic aspirations. She had longed for such a man, and now when she had found him it was too late. Nevertheless her heart went forward, first with tenderness and admiration, then with vehement yearning and passion, toward him, and he, feeling within himself the same dangerous emotions, found it useless to resist.

"Die Rheinische Thalia."

In the autumn of 1784, Schiller, seeing no prospect of gaining his support by poetical pursuits, founded a short-lived journal, "Die Rheinische Thalia" ("The Rhenish Thalia"). It was to be devoted, as its much-promising prospectus announced, chiefly to the discussion of dramatic and literary topics. He hoped that his fame as the author of "The Robbers" and "Fiesco" would make the public eager to subscribe for his journal; but the public did not manifest the slightest curiosity regarding his opinions on dramatic and æsthetic matters, and in consequence the subscriptions were slow in coming, and

the journal was in danger of dying before it was born. At length, in March, 1785, the first number appeared, containing besides the first act of "Don Carlos" a translation from Diderot's "Jacques le Fataliste," an essay on the antique sculptures in the Manheim museum, and various articles on the drama and the condition of the Manheim theatre. Here he had occasion to criticise rather severely the performances of some of the actors, who promptly resented his words as an insult to themselves and the theatre, and did their best to excite Dalberg against the author. And Dalberg was now only too ready to lend an ear to any accusation against Schiller.

Its table of contents.

Several months before the publication of the "Thalia" Schiller had received a very beautiful portfolio, containing four portraits in pencil, and letters expressive of gratitude and enthusiastic admiration. The writers were four young people in Leipsic, — Christian Gottfried Körner[1] and Ferdinand Huber, betrothed respectively to the sisters Minna and Dora Stock. The gift cheered and comforted the poet; he thirsted for praise and recognition, and had never needed them more than at this critical juncture of his existence. His creditors were getting ever more clamorous, and his father, who persisted in taking a severely practical view of his position, had repeatedly urged him to return home and devote himself to the practice of medicine. As the son refused to accept this advice, the old captain lost all patience with him, and censured him in the bitterest terms. To him the son was merely a foolish enthusiast, who from caprice had given up a sure living, and now was little better than a vagabond. Streicher relates that Schiller at this time actually thought of resuming the study of medicine, though not of returning to Stuttgart. Even if he had ever seriously entertained such a resolution, his indebtedness there would have been a hindrance. For he was yet

A present from friends in Leipsic.

Disagreement between Schiller and his father.

[1] Father of the poet, Theodore Körner.

unable to pay, and his father was equally unable to offer further security. He had made his first debts to defray the expenses of the printing of "The Robbers," and a friend had been surety for the payment of the original sum (two hundred florins). But by the accumulation of interest this sum had now grown to three hundred florins, and the friend, in order to escape arrest, had to flee to Manheim. In this distressing dilemma Schiller had to apply once more to his old stand-by, Streicher, who finally induced his landlord, a builder named Hölzel, to advance the money to his friend.

A distressing situation.

Amid all these trials and perplexities, the writing of "Don Carlos" was slowly and steadily progressing. The author's passion for Charlotte von Kalb, which kept him continually at the extremes of feeling, wrought itself into the tragedy, and there found its expression. Margaret Schwan, not to speak of other minor attachments which he is said to have cherished in Manheim, faded in the presence of this overpowering emotion. On one occasion he had taken courage to speak to Charlotte of his deplorable situation, and had expressed his determination to seek his fortune in some large city in the North, he hardly yet knew where. He was astonished at the amount of feeling she displayed at learning this, and scarcely knew how to interpret it; but ere they parted, she had herself given him the clew. With the unreflecting impetuosity which was the key-note of her character she confessed to him that her life would be empty and joyless without him, and besought him, if it were possible, to find some means of maintaining himself and still remain where she could draw strength and comfort from his presence. She even, in her ardor, accused him of being heartlessly ambitious, since in the pursuit of his own worldly aims he disregarded both her happiness and his own. However startling this revelation may have been to Schiller, it was by no means unwelcome. Nevertheless he remained firm

Frau von Kalb confesses her love for Schiller.

in his resolution to leave Manheim; and Charlotte, probably in her cooler moments recognizing the wisdom of his intention, promised to facilitate his plan. It is not unlikely that it was she who first recommended to him to gain the favor of the Duke of Weimar, whose relation to Goethe had brought him the reputation of being a kind of German Mæcenas. Furnished with letters of introduction from her and from Dalberg, Schiller accordingly presented himself before the duke, who was then on a visit in Darmstadt, and obtained permission to read before the court the first act of "Don Carlos." On the following day (December 27, 1784) he received a letter from his highness, conferring upon him the honorary title of *Rath* (councilor), which, though it brought him no emoluments, was of considerable value to him in his dealings with publishers and theatrical managers.

Schiller obtains recommendations to the Duke of Saxe-Weimar.

As no further result seemed likely to come from his acquaintance with Karl August, Schiller bethought himself of his friends in Leipsic, and hastened to reply to their letters. In the correspondence which followed, he stated his reasons for wishing to leave Manheim, and gave Körner an insight into his financial difficulties. Körner responded heartily, advised him to come, and inclosed a check for three hundred thalers. In April, 1785, Schiller took leave of all his friends in Manheim. Margaret Schwan presented him with a fine portfolio, and was so kind and cordial in her manner that he half regretted his resolution to leave her. But a far harder ordeal was the separation from Charlotte von Kalb. If the conversation between Maya and Fimarete, in the book of Memoirs, is a verbatim report of what actually was said, they indulged in some very extravagant language, and parted with a kiss and assurances of undying devotion. The last hours were devoted to Streicher. The two young men talked enthusiastically of their plans for the future, and half jokingly agreed not to see each other again until the one

Körner advises Schiller to come to Leipsic.

was leader of an orchestra and the other a minister of state. Schiller hoped by a year of faithful study to be able to pass an examination in jurisprudence at the University of Leipsic, and thenceforth to maintain himself independent of his literary labors.

April 17, 1785, he arrived in Leipsic.

VI.

SCHILLER was cordially received in Leipsic by his admirers, Ferdinand Huber and the sisters Dora and Minna Stock. Körner, although a native of Leipsic, resided in Dresden, where he held a position in connection with the consistory.

Huber was born in Paris, and his mother was a Frenchwoman. She did her best to spoil her son, and even after he had grown to manhood treated him as if he had been an infant. She sent a maid after him if he stayed out late, and strove by a hundred foolish devices to keep him in perpetual dependence. Nevertheless he soon, in æsthetic matters, emancipated himself from her influence. He was full of enthusiasm for Shakspere, and had, as we have seen, been one of the first to recognize the genius of Schiller, while his parents clung to the traditions of the French Academy. He was a very clever actor in private theatricals, and possessed a remarkable talent as an improvisatore. By these and other accomplishments he succeeded in gaining the favor of Dora Stock, who had refused much more advantageous offers, preferring to bide her time until Huber should have conquered for himself the position to which his talents entitled him. Ferdinand Huber.

Dora was a charming though somewhat capricious young lady, a skillful artist, full of spirit and determination, fertile in resources, brilliant in conversation, and inclined to view the world from its humorous side. Her sister Minna, who had pledged her troth to Körner, was perhaps less accomplished, but gentler in her manner, and every way a most attractive and lovable woman. Dora and Minna Stock.

Into this circle Schiller was now introduced. It was at the time of the great fair, when all commercial Europe, in former times, was accustomed to hold rendezvous in Leipsic. The public squares are then covered with booths filled with wares of all descriptions, and all the traveling wonders of creation are exhibited in canvas tents, erected within convenient distance from the centres of trade. In Richter's coffee-house, where Schiller temporarily took up his lodgings, the author of "The Robbers" was supposed to be one of the attractions of the fair, and was gazed at with a curiosity equal to that which fell to the share of the fat woman, the bearded beauty, and the devourer of steel screws and five-inch nails. People were greatly disappointed because he looked so much like ordinary mortals. The proprietor of a monkey theatre, which Schiller visited with some of his friends, even carried his courtesy so far as to refuse to accept the entrance money, because it was a principle with him never to charge admission to a "colleague."

The Leipsic fair.

Schiller and his "colleague."

Early in the summer Schiller moved out to Gohlis, a small village about an hour's walk from Leipsic. July 2d, Körner arrived from Dresden, and a warm friendship soon sprang up between them. Körner, a jurist by profession, was three years older than Schiller; he had studied in Göttingen, traveled much, and acquired a varied knowledge of the world. His father's death, in 1785, had made him pecuniarily independent, though not rich. Manliness and generosity were the leading elements of his character. He possessed that firmness, that calm self-reliance, which Schiller lacked. The poet at their very first meeting was sensible of this, and felt strongly attracted to Körner.

Christian Gottfried Körner.

"He[1] [Körner] was an accomplished musician, a connoisseur of art and literature; the first man to whom the poet

[1] *Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur seit Lessing's Tod.* Erster Band, p. 208. Fünfte Auflage.

looked up. Besides, he was externally of stately presence; full of feeling, and yet measured in his manner; of iron principles, and yet liberal toward every nature which he could respect."

Friendships in the eighteenth century.

A German friendship, especially in the last century, was nothing if not sentimental; it must have a warm romantic tinge; must be demonstrative, enthusiastic, declamatory. The eighteenth century, with its morbidly introspective tendencies, and its rage for diaries, could not afford to waste one drop of its own precious emotion: hence the emotional extravagance which characterizes, for instance, Goethe's youth; the redundance of his short-lived ardor for a Jacobi, a Kestner, a Charlotte Buff; and the general disproportion between sentiment and its expression in a hundred similar relations, with the records of which the literary annals of both France and Germany in the eighteenth century abound. The slow and half imperceptible growth of affection between two men of Anglo-Saxon blood would seem a tame and unpoetical affair to a German youth who had not yet outlived his Werther period.

Schiller's enthusiasm for Körner.

All this must be borne in mind, if we are to appreciate the festal mood in which Schiller for the first time approaches Körner. They spend a day together at the house of one of Körner's relatives; Schiller is fired with enthusiastic admiration. Two days later he writes, apropos of his homeward journey in the evening with Huber and the publisher Göschen: "Oh, how beautiful, how god-like, is the contact of two souls who meet on their path toward the divine! Hitherto, you had not been mentioned with a single syllable, but still I read your name in Huber's eye, and involuntarily I uttered it. Our eyes met, and our sacred resolution dissolved into our sacred friendship. It was a silent pledge to remain faithful to the resolve of this moment, — mutually to help each other onward to our goals, — each to exhort and stimulate the other, and not to rest contented until we

Letter from Schiller to Körner.

had reached the boundary, beyond which human greatness does not advance. Oh, my friend, only this intimate union of ours, this (I cannot refrain from repeating it) our sacred friendship, were capable of making us great, good, and happy."

Körner, with all his stalwart practical sense, has still a fresh vein of sentiment in him. He responds with a warm, beautiful spontaneity to Schiller's appeal; the calm, sincere, and cordial tone of his letter convinces the poet that here he has at last found the friend he has long sought,—a friend who understands him, can sympathize with his pursuits, and, moreover, is personally attached to him. He has now no hesitation in laying before him his pecuniary condition; he proposes that Körner, who has an interest in Göschen's publishing house, shall bring out a new partial edition of his writings, and begs him, in case he accepts this offer, to advance a sum which he might consider as reasonably secured by the copyright. In his reply Körner displays a delicacy and a tender regard for the poet's sense of honor which cannot be too highly praised. He understands perfectly well that Schiller is destitute, and in pressing need of money. He knows also that in the absence of efficient copyright laws piratical editions destroyed the chance of profit on any work the novelty of which did not secure for it a rapid and immediate sale. Nevertheless he wishes to help his friend, and to help him in a manner least calculated to wound his self-respect. He therefore gives his benevolence the air of a business transaction, and promises to confer with Göschen concerning the proposed edition of Schiller's writings. "I know," he says, "that you are able, as soon as you make up your mind to work for bread, to satisfy all your wants. But at least for a year grant me the pleasure to relieve you from the necessity of working for bread."

Schiller proposes that Körner shall publish an edition of his writings.

Körner's reply.

Körner's principal object is to afford his friend leisure and

freedom from care, so as to enable him to finish "Don Carlos," concerning which he has great expectations.

In the mean while, before his path was thus happily cleared before him, Schiller wrote a rather enigmatical letter to Schwan, which has been variously interpreted. He there formally applied for Margaret's hand, promised vaguely, in case he was accepted, to devote himself with increased energy to medicine, and cited many weighty reasons why he would be likely to make an excellent and desirable husband. Schwan's letter, in reply, has not been preserved, but there is little doubt that he declined to entertain the poet's proposition;[1] probably because, without undervaluing his talents, he had no confidence in his ability to earn a livelihood for himself, and possibly because he feared that his own wealth might have been among the more or less conscious reasons for the proposal. There can of course be no direct evidence that this was the case, and accordingly no necessity for questioning the purity of Schiller's motives. He longed, as he frankly states in his letter, for a home and a settled position, and Margaret's cordiality toward him at their parting in Manheim had, now that he was removed from the influence of Frau von Kalb, fanned his smouldering affection for her into full blaze.

Schiller proposes to marry Margaret Schwan.

Schwan declines.

August 7, 1785, Körner was married to Minna Stock, and Schiller celebrated the occasion by an epithalamium, breathing strong personal devotion and fervid wishes for the happiness of the wedded pair.

Körner's marriage.

[1] Carlyle (*Life of Schiller*, London, 1825) is of opinion that Schwan accepted Schiller as a son-in-law, but that the latter, for some unexplained reason, failed to apply to the daughter directly, thus offending her by his neglect, until the renewal of their relation became an impossibility. Palleske, on the other hand (*Schiller's Leben und Werke*, Stuttgart, 1877), maintains, and, as it appears to me, proves beyond reasonable doubt, that Schwan, without consulting his daughter, politely declined, but remained in friendly correspondence with Schiller. In his old age he always spoke with affection and reverence of Schiller, while his daughter's name was seldom mentioned.

They immediately removed to Dresden, whither Schiller soon followed them. After a brief residence in the city, a room was prepared for him at Körner's villa, where, surrounded by congenial influences and home-like comfort, he could freely devote himself to his favorite pursuits. Körner, who studied his peculiarities with sympathetic interest, was ever ready to enter into his ideas, and in the evening, when the family were gathered in the parlor, philosophical and literary topics were discussed with much brilliancy and animation. In philosophy Schiller was yet a *dilettante*, while Körner, who with all his practical intelligence had a decidedly speculative turn of mind, was an ardent disciple of Kant, to whose writings he had devoted much close and earnest study. In the "Thalia," which Schiller continued to edit, appeared about this time a series of "Philosophical Letters," in which two friends, Julius and Raphael, discuss the essence of the soul, immortality, and the other unsolved, profound problems which have always baffled the ingenuity of sages and philosophers. The vague eudemonistic pantheism of Schiller finds its advocate in Julius, while the inexorable logic and more cautious conjectures of Kant are ably expounded by Raphael. The redundancy of style and rhetorical imagery of the former easily betray Schiller, while the sober severity and less fluent diction of the latter make the conclusion probable that the letters of Raphael were not only suggested but were actually written by Körner. These metaphysical discourses were never completed; as speculations they were ingenious and interesting, but they offer no solution of the troublesome problems.

Schiller in Körner's home.

"Philosophical Letters."

In the beginning of the year 1786, there appeared in the "Thalia" three lyrical poems, which increased Schiller's popularity immensely. They are entitled "Freigeisterei der Leidenschaft" ("Freethinking of Passion"), "Resignation" and "Lied an die Freude" ("Song to Joy"). There is a magnificent fearlessness in

Three great lyrics.

these lyrics, a Pythian madness, which hurries the poet through a series of wild, delirious visions, defying both the morals and the logic of reality. Their tumultuous melody and the splendor of their rhythm impress them, in spite of their length, indelibly upon the memory. The rapid *legato* movement of the long lines is interrupted here and there, at irregular intervals, by a short, abrupt staccato, arresting reflection as by a passionate gesture. The headlong impulse of Schiller's inspiration brooks no law; with superb heedlessness he plunges into the midst of his theme, and trusts to luck how he is to get through it. But his pinions are strong, and strong too the breeze that upbears them; he rarely, if ever, flounders. In the "Odes to Laura," and in fact in all his youthful poems, one is never shocked by the irregularity of the metres; there seems to be a higher law than that of spondees and trochees and dactyls, which governs these wild and wayward melodies, and if at times they defy scanning on your fingers, they yield very naturally and readily to the rhythmical instinct of the voice. The impetuosity, as well as the occasional irregularity of the movement, on the other hand, imparts to them something of the air and charm of improvisations.

Characteristics of the lyrics of Schiller's "second period."

Any student of German literature will have remarked that the rules of prosody are much more lax, or, at all events, their interpretation less rigid, among German than among English poets. The Tennysonian finish and exquisite use of the musical resources of the language are rarely found in German verse. Freiligrath, to be sure, had some ambition in this direction, and displayed an admirable skill in the handling of difficult metres; but as artists who have acquired a great facility in painting mediæval armors or obsolete costumes frequently forget to put a living man inside of them, so this poet is apt to expend his energy on technical curiosities and wonderful rhymes, while his poetic afflatus is not strong enough to set all this

German and English prosody.

cumbrous machinery in motion. The beautiful, tempered heat and the absolute harmony of spirit and form which impress us so delightfully in Tennyson's noblest lyrics I have never found equaled in any German poem. And yet no one will deny that Goethe, though he shook his lyrics out of his sleeves and cared little where they fell, was a greater poet than Tennyson. Goethe rhymes *Freude* and *Leide*, *hängt* and *gelenkt*, etc., and his verses have sometimes a certain slipshod impromptu air, as if they had been surprised in *négligé*; you feel convinced of their worth, but you wish they had found time to devote a few minutes to their toilette. And yet, you may object, a king is less dependent upon costume than a plebeian; and Goethe's thought can dignify even the simplest, most unpretentious verse.

Goethe and Tennyson as rhythmic artists.

The "Freethinking of Passion" and "Resignation" properly supplement each other, being both inspired by Schiller's hopeless love for Frau von Kalb. They are a violent protest against the Christian code of morals. The church requires that we shall mortify the flesh, conquer our nature, and promises us abundant reward hereafter. The expectation of any such reward the poet pronounces as unworthy of a wise man, and moreover in itself a delusion: "Let him who can believe, renounce;" but he who cannot believe, let him enjoy. These two flowers, hope or faith and enjoyment, give happiness to mortals; each must choose one or the other; they do not bloom together. [1]

"Freethinking of Passion," and "Resignation."

[1] As an instance of the daring consistency of these youthful lyrics of Schiller's, I quote the two following verses from *Freigeisterei der Leidenschaft*, in which he implores the fictitious Laura, to whom the poem is addressed, to break the oath which she has sworn before the altar: —

Weil ein Gebrauch, den die Gesetze heilig prägen,
Des Zufalls schwere Missethat geweiht?
Nein, — unerschrocken trotz' ich einem Bund entgegen,
Den die erröthende Natur bereut.

O, sitt're nicht — du hast als Sünderin geschworen,
Ein Meineid ist der Reue fromme Pflicht.
Das Herz war mein, das du vor dem Altar verloren,
Mit Menschenfreuden spielt der Himmel nicht.

The "Song to Joy" is another confused proclamation of emancipation from those conventional laws and prejudices with which — according to the poet — civilization has fettered the human spirit. Its tendency is epicurean: joy is the great principle which drives the wheels in the huge clock of the universe; which calls forth suns out of the firmament, rolls the heavenly bodies through space, makes cannibals gentle, and performs a great many other miracles which had formerly been attributed to mechanical causes. In this wildly dithyrambic strain he proposes the health of the dead, and of God Almighty Himself, and proclaims the abolition of hell. With all its logical impossibilities the poem has a unity of its own, and sometimes rises to a shuddering exaltation.

"Song to Joy."

VII.

IT had been Körner's endeavor gently to remove all sordid cares from his friend's path, so as to enable him to live his own ideal life, and accomplish his lofty mission. For Schiller had never ceased to conceive of his poetic vocation as a mission. His heart was still hot with indignation against the oppressors of his fatherland, and we have seen that in all he had hitherto written, he had had the ulterior aim of denouncing all spiritual and political tyranny. In Bauerbach, where the plot of "Don Carlos" first began to assume shape, he had conceived the intention of making it a satire against the inquisition and all kinds of clerical oppressions; in Manheim, where Iffland's domestic dramas and his own "Love and Intrigue" had been so favorably received, he changed his plan, and contented himself with making it a domestic tragedy in a royal household. His daily intercourse with Körner had given a new impetus to his thought, and enlarged the sphere of his ideas. He now required a wider arena of action; he strove to substitute an historical for the merely individual interest, and gradually, as the half torpid material again became animated under his warm touch, the many minor motives which from time to time had asserted themselves as springs of action easily subordinated themselves to the one strong humanitarian purpose which now inspired him.

Körner's solicitude for Schiller.

"Don Carlos" resumed, and the scope of its plot enlarged.

Körner had taught Schiller to build his ideals not in the air, but on the firm basis of reality. He believed that a glorious future was in store for the human race, and amid the many sad and discouraging phenomena of the present, he

detected the promise of better things to come. No doubt the two friends, both inspired with a generous love of their kind, frequently discussed the destiny of humanity, and probably much that was thus suggested to Schiller is to be found, in an idealized form, in the famous dialogue between the king and Marquis Posa. Schiller's friendship for Körner became that of Don Carlos for Posa; his love for Frau von Kalb, with its many tragical possibilities, poured its vitality into the scenes between Carlos and the queen, his father's wife. Körner's personality served to individualize Posa, and that of Frau von Kalb, etherealized by the distance, lent many a fine, womanly touch to the stately and passionate queen.

Schiller's and Körner's philosophical discussions possibly the origin of Marquis Posa's theories of government.

In the first three acts, which were printed in the "Thalia," Marquis Posa plays a very subordinate part; in the fourth act, in his interview with the king, he suddenly steps into the foreground, overshadows Don Carlos, and becomes the real hero of the tragedy. If "Don Carlos" had not been written before the French Revolution, a critic might have been justified in saying that such a character was an impossibility before that grand historical tragedy had been enacted. And as a matter of fact, the public were, previously to the Revolution, incapable of comprehending what the poet meant by the cosmopolitanism of Posa, — his humanitarian enthusiasm, and his declamation about the natural rights of man; and Schiller, wearied by the stupid misinterpretations of the critics, wrote at last a series of letters on "Don Carlos," in which he strove to bring his public *en rapport* with himself by explaining, as far as it was capable of explanation, the spirit in which his tragedy was conceived. He especially dwells on the significance of Marquis Posa's character, and strives to justify what he himself, no doubt, felt to be the weakest point in the tragedy, the daring intrigue on which the marquis stakes his own life and that of his dearest friend.

Letters on "Don Carlos."

The very briefest outline of the plot must suffice. Philip II. has married Elizabeth of Valois, for whose hand he had first applied in behalf of his son Don Carlos. The betrothal has actually taken place, and Don Carlos and the princess already love each other, when the old Philip comes, and by diplomatic intrigues steals his son's bride. The prince is gloomy, almost despairing; his father is suspicious of him and sets spies to dog his steps. At last he obtains a half surreptitious interview with the queen in a garden at Aranjuez; he declares his love for her, and she gently warns him to be on his guard. The Princess of Eboli, one of the queen's maids of honor, loves Don Carlos, and believing his attentions to his stepmother to have been meant for her, invites him to a rendezvous. Thinking that the message is from the queen, he goes, and to his horror finds the princess. She betrays herself completely, and, discovering her dire mistake, determines to avenge herself. She reveals her suspicions to Don Carlos's enemies, Duke Alba and the king's father confessor Domingo. At their instigation she steals the prince's portrait and letters from the queen's desk. The wily priest, in the mean while, artfully manœuvres the king; he convinces him that the time of the birth of the *infanta* Clara Eugenie is not in accordance with his calculations, and nearly drives him to fury.

An outline of the plot of "Don Carlos."

Don Carlos and the Princess of Eboli.

At this time the king takes Marquis Posa, the bosom friend of Don Carlos, into his confidence. The marquis is a generous enthusiast, brave, fearless, and open-hearted. In a magnificently eloquent appeal he strives to impress upon Philip his own noble theories of government. He demands liberty of thought, and pleads the cause of the oppressed Netherlands, whither Alba is just going to execute his terrible sentence. The king is surprised at such frankness, and at the same time charmed by the ardor and generous heedlessness of the

Marquis Posa gains the royal favor.

youth. The marquis, who has the fate of the Netherlands more at heart than his own safety, enters into a plot with Don Carlos and the queen. Don Carlos is to go to Brussels and head the rebellion against his father, and the queen is to furnish money for the enterprise. In the mean while the Princess of Eboli has betrayed the queen, and the life of Don Carlos is in danger. Posa, in order to counteract the effect of her treachery, gets possession of the note she has written to the prince, inviting him to her chamber, and shows the note to the king. In a passionate scene Philip insults his wife; in flying she stumbles, and hurts herself slightly. Carlos hears an exaggerated report of what has happened; warned by Count Lerma, he begins to doubt the purity of Posa's intentions. He had entrusted the latter with his portfolio, in which were letters from the queen. Believing the king to be in possession of the dangerous documents, he hastens to the Princess Eboli, and implores her to admit him to the queen's apartments. Posa, believing him about to make a confession to the princess that might compromise him, arrests him in the king's name; hoping that, if he succeeds in averting Philip's suspicion, Carlos may yet be saved, the noble marquis determines upon a last desperate move. He resolves to sacrifice himself in order to save the prince. In a letter to the leaders of the Netherland rebellion, intended to fall into the king's hands, he accuses himself of cherishing a guilty love for the queen, and promises to join the rebellion. Immediately after he is murdered in Carlos's prison, where he has come to bid his friend a last adieu. Carlos is by his own father handed over to the inquisition, and is killed.

The treachery of the Princess of Eboli.

Posa arrests Don Carlos.

It is interesting in comparing the early dramas of Schiller to notice the consistent development of his political idealism. In "The Robbers" and "Love and Intrigue" he merely felt the gross injustice of the conditions which surrounded him, and the misery

Intellectual evolution in Schiller's dramas.

which they occasioned to all those who were placed in situations similar to his own; the only remedy which then suggested itself was the emancipation of the oppressed individual from his allegiance to the law, and open warfare against society. And this remedy he himself saw to be a very ineffectual one. In "Don Carlos" he has advanced a step further: Posa hopes to alleviate the misery of suffering humanity through his influence with a powerful monarch. Like Goethe and Wieland he believes enlightened despotism to be, at least for the time, the best possible form of government. All his hopes for the future are centered in Don Carlos, from whose wisdom, sense of justice, and humane disposition he expects the most blessed results for his down-trodden subjects. That there are mightier agencies at work in the history of mankind than the will of a despot seems never to have occurred to him; the gradual transformation of the feudal state into an industrial one, and the regenerating power of well-equalized labor and political responsibility (so distinctly foreshadowed in Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister"), are ideas which are as yet beyond the horizon both of Schiller and of his hero. Democracy was until the last decade of the eighteenth century a bugbear which did not dare to walk abroad in the daylight.

"Enlightened despotism."

The first three dramas of Schiller were written in prose; in "Don Carlos" he for the first time adopted blank verse or iambic pentameter, in which all his later dramas are written. He hesitated for a while in his choice, and a prose version of "Don Carlos" is still extant. He was fully conscious that the metrical form necessitated a more uniform loftiness in the diction, and excluded the daring realism which had characterized "The Robbers" and "Fiesco."

Prose exchanged for blank verse.

"Don Carlos" appeared first on the stage in Hamburg, August 29, 1787, where the great actor, Schröder, played Philip II. with magnificent effect. In Berlin, where it was

brought upon the boards more than a year later, the king, Frederick William II., was greatly impressed. Schiller wrote jocosely to his friends in Bauerbach that he was daily looking for a call to Berlin, where he expected to succeed Herzberg as Prussian premier. The first printed edition of the drama was published by Göschen, in 1787, and four new editions followed in rapid succession, beside several piratical reprints.

"Don Carlos" on the stage.

Among the various abandoned enterprises belonging to the Dresden period is the fragment of a novel entitled "Der Geisterseher" (The Ghostseer, Visionary). Germany was, during the latter half of the last century, living in a continual dread of the Jesuits, who were supposed to be exerting themselves, by the subtlest intrigues, to gain ascendency in the government, in order thereby to reclaim the land for "the only saving church." The bookseller Nicolai, in Berlin, smelt Jesuits at the bottom of every unusual event, political as well as literary, and expended much energy of lungs in warning the public against their wiles. No doubt Nicolai was something of a monomaniac on this subject, but, as the sequel proved, his fears were not entirely groundless. Schiller's novel represents such a plot for the conversion of a German prince of a small Protestant state to Catholicism. The great sensation which that king of charlatans, Cagliostro, was making at the various courts of Europe, and the general rage of the times for spiritism, mesmerism, and all sorts of illuministic hallucinations, furnished Schiller with the external machinery for his plot, and gave him an opportunity for ridiculing (though in a very serious manner) the credulity of the exalted personages who were then paying large sums for the privilege of being duped by an ingenious impostor. Otherwise the chief merit of the story lies in the marvelous insight it displays into the morbid and pathological phases of the human soul. A germ of

"Der Geisterseher."

Nicolai's dread of the Jesuits.

Count Cagliostro.

Merits of "Der Geisterseher."

superstition lurks in all of us, which, if surrounded by favorable conditions, will develop rapidly. The ingenuity of the intrigue, and especially the delicate portraiture of the enlightened yet feeble and impressible prince, prove that Schiller, had his ambition been in that direction, might have achieved as great a success as a novelist as he did in his chosen province of the drama. In view of the recent reappearance of spiritualism in our own day, "Der Geisterseher" may still be recommended as wholesome reading. Unfortunately the theme began to appear trifling to the author, before he had reached the end, and as he progressed his interest steadily waned, until at last it became impossible for him to continue.

"Der Menschenfeind."

Another fragment written in Dresden (1786) is "Der Menschenfeind" ("The Misanthrope"), which appeared in the eleventh number of the "Thalia" (1790) under a somewhat modified title ("Der versöhnte Menschenfeind:" "The Misanthrope reconciled"). It is in dramatic form, and was designed as a tragedy; but before the first act was completed, Schiller concluded that misanthropy of the kind he had chosen to represent was not well qualified for tragic treatment. Again and again he tried to revive his interest in the fragment, but always gave it up in despair.

Solitude and discontent.

The Christmas of 1786 was a very lonely one to Schiller. Körner and his wife went to Leipsic, to visit their relatives, and Schiller remained with Huber, in Dresden. It was a very dreary and solitary life he led, and he soon grew discontented. He was nothing to Huber, he writes, and Huber little to him. He felt the need of something to distract him. With his present fame he could easily have gained access to fashionable society in the Saxon capital, but he was too shy and modest a man to desire to shine in aristocratic circles, and probably he was a little too proud, too, to be governed by the humiliating code of etiquette which regulates the aristocratic world in Germany.

At all events, whatever his reasons may have been, he shunned general society in Dresden, as he had done in Leipsic, and continued to do, even after his removal to Weimar. In a small circle of friends, where he ran no risk of knocking against the invisible barriers of rank and prejudice, he always appeared to best advantage; then he talked with a charming ease and warm animation; the vigor of his thought and the splendor of his language commanded admiring attention. That semblance of improvisation which gives such an irresistible charm to Schiller's lyrics was, no doubt, in a still higher degree characteristic of his conversation; only in the latter instance it was not a semblance, but reality.

Gift of conversation.

To break the monotony of his solitude during the absence of his friends, Schiller resorted to various public places of amusement, frequented the theatres, and even, according to his own confession, began to haunt the green tables; but his career as a gambler was very brief; he won, but had the good sense to break off before the passion conquered him. Another passion, and a much more absorbing one, may have tended to wean him from his incipient taste for *rouge et noir*. At a masquerade he became completely infatuated with a young lady named Henriette von Arnim, the daughter of a deceased officer in the Saxon army. She was a magnificent, queenly brunette, and fully conscious of her attractions. Her mother, who had a strictly maternal conscience, admitted the then celebrated poet to her house, and encouraged his attentions, because it enhanced the daughter's price in the general market. The daughter, who was no less pleased at Schiller's ardor, was, as it appears, sincerely devoted to him; but hers was a wayward heart, and she could not always control it. She had been brought up with the idea that her beauty was a capital which was to be profitably invested, and not risked without absolute security. So she yielded to her mother's worldly plans,

Incipient taste for gambling.

Henriette von Arnim.

and speculated with Schiller's love, as she did with her own physical splendor. She warned him that he must not expect to see her whenever he saw a lighted candle in a certain window; then they were having a family company, she asserted, and other visitors were not welcome. And Schiller innocently promised to observe the signal, hardly suspecting, although his friends did their best to bring him to his senses, that his beloved was devoting these evenings to wealthier and more favored lovers. In the spring of 1787 the Arnims left Dresden, but returned within a few months. Portraits were exchanged, and the relation threatened to enter upon a more serious phase; a poem, written in the young lady's autograph album, more meritorious in point of sentiment than in diction, seems to indicate that he had placed his hand and heart at her disposal. With the heedless liberality of a lover he squandered his hard-earned money in expensive presents to this dazzling coquette.

Schiller's infatuation.

While this infatuation lasted, Schiller's literary energy flagged; he could not work with his former enthusiasm, and the unspoken reproaches of his friends, which he probably read plainly enough in their eyes, irritated him the more because he felt that they were not ungrounded. Körner valued him as a man of genius more than he loved him as a man. He was himself so strong and so free from weaknesses that the inexplicable conduct of the enamored poet must have appeared very enigmatical to him. Very likely, in his own mind, he judged him, and not always leniently. If this was the case, it could not have been long concealed from so sensitive a soul as Schiller. He began to feel discontented, both with himself and with others, and a letter from Frau von Kalb, announcing her intended visit to Weimar and advising him to follow her thither, was a welcome pretext for withdrawing from his present dependent position. He yearned to make the acquaintance of the great coryphei of German

Schiller's inactivity and morbid sensitiveness.

letters, and expected, moreover, by means of his "Don Carlos," to gain the favor of the duke, and perhaps a comfortable livelihood, which might secure him against want in the future and enable him to invoke the Muses henceforth with a stronger and more joyous voice.

Körner placed no obstacles in his way; he was sincerely convinced that the journey would benefit him, and gave him much brotherly advice on the way. They parted in the most affectionate manner and with promises of frequent correspondence.

Schiller leaves Dresden.

"I might have enjoyed you completely," writes Schiller, some months later, probably with reference to the Arnim affair, "but my soul was overclouded with turbulent moods; a debt oppresses me which I am aware that I have not yet paid you."

Of course it is not the pecuniary indebtedness which thus disquiets him; now that he had awakened from his intoxication and could judge himself coolly, he probably remembered many an ungenerous thought and emotion which he would like to do penance for. But this could only be touched upon remotely and warily; it was too delicate a theme for epistolary discussion.

There were signs, even before Schiller left Dresden, that his reason was about to return to him. No sooner had he arrived in Weimar (July 21, 1787) than his old passion for Frau von Kalb again took complete possession of him. He showed her Fräulein von Arnim's portrait, and Charlotte was generous enough to express her surprise at its wonderful beauty. Of course he must have made a complete confession, interspersing his tale, no doubt, with those comments of half-contemptuous pity which men are apt to bestow upon their defunct love affairs. He was now of opinion that his ex-flame was a heartless coquette, in which opinion he appears to have done her a great injustice. Schiller was never the man to unravel the complicated motives which impel the springs of

Schiller arrives in Weimar.

action in a woman's heart. With all his insight into the intricacies of politics in past centuries, he remained extremely single-hearted in his dealings with the fair sex. He was always inclined to extreme opinions, which erred as often on the side of generosity as they did on that of severity. Fräulein von Arnim, it is told, kept his portrait hanging over her bed till the day of her death.

His judgment of women.

VIII.

OUR principal source of information regarding Schiller's first sojourn in Weimar is his own uninterrupted and minutely descriptive correspondence with Körner. He came with high expectations; and his first experiences were very disappointing; hence the bitter, superciliously critical tone of his comments on Weimar and its society.

The first evening was devoted to Frau von Kalb; she had awaited his arrival with "a violent, anxious impatience." She had exhausted all her power of emotion in anticipating the joy of their meeting; now she seemed almost callous, or too weary to be demonstrative. Meeting with Frau von Kalb.

"Charlotte," he writes, in a letter to Körner (July 23, 1787), "is a great, strange, womanly soul, a real study to me, and one which could give a greater spirit than mine much material for reflection. At every stage of our intercourse I discover new phenomena in her which surprise and enrapture me, like beautiful vistas in a broad landscape. I am now more curious than ever to know how this mind would impress yours."

And again, two weeks later: "Can you believe me, dear Körner, — it is almost impossible to me to write to you about Charlotte? And I cannot even tell you why. Our relation — if you can comprehend this expression — is like revealed religion, founded upon faith. . . . . We began with a presentiment of what the result would be, and now we must investigate and confirm our religion by means of our reason."

It further appears that Frau von Kalb was contemplating

a separation from her husband, who had married her only for her estates, and whom she had never pretended to love. Schiller speaks of an important letter which he has addressed to Herr von Kalb, and adds that he is impatiently awaiting his reply. At all events, the society of Weimar recognized the relation of Schiller to the beautiful Charlotte as in no wise an unusual one. The duchess dowager invited them together to her æsthetic tea-parties, and Schiller even thought he had just cause for offense when, on one occasion, his name was not expressly mentioned, but rather implied, in the phrase "Frau von Kalb, with escort."

Her contemplated separation from her husband.

Schiller's first literary visit was to Wieland, whose appearance and conversation he found disappointing. Wieland was circumstantial, even to pedantry, and made commonplace observations. He was very flattering, however, and predicted that, although he did not admire Schiller's earlier productions, he had the stuff in him for a great author. "Don Carlos" he had not read. At this Schiller requested the privilege of sending him a copy. Wieland promised to give the younger poet the benefit of his opinion, and even proposed that they should go through the tragedy together from beginning to end.

Schiller visits Wieland.

Of much greater significance was the meeting with Herder, which is vividly described in that admirable letter to Körner of August 8, 1787. Herder is surprising and impressive by the vehemence of his love and his hatred. He loves Goethe with a passion which amounts to worship. He has, to all appearances, never read a syllable by Schiller, but treats him as a man concerning whom he has a vague suspicion that he is distinguished for something or other. The next Sunday Schiller goes to hear Herder preach: "The text was the unjust steward. . . . . The whole sermon resembled a discourse which a man holds with himself; extremely plain,

Visit to Herder.

Herder as a preacher.

popular, natural. It was not an oration, but a very sensible talk: a maxim of practical philosophy, applied to certain details of civic life, — doctrines which one might just as well expect to hear in a mosque as in a Christian church. . . . . There can be no mistake that he is conscious of his dignity. . . . . He feels himself as a superior intelligence, surrounded by inferior creatures. Herder's sermon pleased me better than any that I have ever heard in my life, — but I must honestly confess that as a general thing no sermon ever pleased me. The public to which a preacher addresses himself is too motley and unequal to make it safe for him to adopt a general satisfactory uniformity of treatment, and he dares not, as an author may, ignore the feebler portion of his audience."[1]

Herder, whom Palleske aptly calls a Marquis Posa in band and gown, had so much in common with Schiller that it was only natural that they should soon learn to value each other. They took long walks together in the park, discussed Kant and Spinoza, and more particularly the unconscious action of soul upon soul, and all those mystical phenomena which the eighteenth century delighted to contemplate.

Walks and talks with Herder.

Goethe and the duke were absent from Weimar when Schiller arrived. The former had not yet returned from Italy; the latter, who had lately entered the Prussian army, availed himself of Goethe's absence to indulge his military proclivities. Schiller looked forward with eager anticipation to the return of both, but in the mean while found sufficiently absorbing interests to occupy his attention. He had firmly resolved to marry. In his letters to Körner the merits and demerits of a number of potential wives are discussed with a cool, worldly sense, which seems to be more than half assumed. After a brief misunderstanding with Wieland, occasioned by the arrival

Marriage speculations.

[1] Letter to Körner of August 12, 1787. *Schiller's Briefe mit geschichtlichen Erläuterungen.* Erster Band, p. 269.

of a certain Gotter, one of Schiller's literary enemies, their former friendly relations were reëstablished, and it is not unlikely that Wieland began to look favorably upon the younger poet as a prospective son-in-law. He was abundantly blessed with daughters, and was never averse to parting with them as a means of promoting his own happiness as well as theirs. Schiller, too, was keen-sighted enough to detect some such intention in the often enigmatical manœuvres of the old courtier, and seemed to be rather inclined to meet him half-way. But before he had yet made the acquaintance of the young lady, a fortunate event happened, which suddenly changed the current of his matrimonial speculations.

Visit to Bauerbach.

Schiller's old hermitage, Bauerbach, was only a few hours' journey from Weimar; and his kind friend Frau von Wolzogen was now living there with her charming daughter Lotte. His own sister Christophine, who had, about a year earlier, married his old companion Reinwald, also resided in the neighborhood. In the last days of November he resolved to revisit these affectionate friends who had been so intimately associated with the struggles and aspirations of his early youth. Lotte was now engaged, and her *fiancé* was with her; so there could be no danger of a revival of the extinct passion. Schiller was received with great cordiality, and spent ten delightful days at Bauerbach. The poetic rejuvenation, however, which he had expected to experience at the sight of this dear familiar region was not realized. December 6th, he made an excursion on horseback with Wilhelm von Wolzogen to the neighboring village, Rudolfstadt; their intention was to visit a near relative of the Wolzogen family, Frau von Lengefeld, the widow of a country nobleman, who lived with her two daughters, Caroline and Charlotte,[1] on a small estate left to her by her husband.

The Lengefeld family.

[1] It is a curious coincidence that all the three ladies who played a prominent part in Schiller's life were named Charlotte: Charlotte von Wolzogen, Charlotte von Kalb, and Charlotte von Lengefeld.

The very complete description of this household which is found in Schiller's letters to Körner, and, by inference, in his correspondence with the two Lengefeld sisters, gives one a charmingly vivid picture of the life led by the German country nobility in the last century.[1] I do not know why, after having read and re-read Lotte's exquisitely old-fashioned letters, I always think of her with a lute or a guitar; the ladies in the last century, I believe, usually played some such instrument. At all events, there was an old square mahogany spinet on four slender legs in the Lengefeld parlor, and when Lotte touched it, it gave a clear, shrill, quivering sound. Schiller sat many an evening in the twilight listening to her simple melodies, and was full of innocent rapture. Most of us remember some picture of a cherished ancestress, not too remote to be within the reach of our affection and sympathy: the sweet maidenly face, perhaps with a touch of primness; the quaint, old-fashioned costume, made of costly stuff whose faint sheen seems to be suggestive of a rich rustle even in the picture; the shapely hand, well skilled in all domestic tasks, — this may or may not resemble Lotte von Lengefeld, but it resembles very much the idea one gains of her from her own heart-effusions and those of her lover.

Lotte von Lengefeld.

Lotte's heart, it appears, was made of inflammable stuff. In Switzerland, where she had gone with her mother and sister in order to learn French, she had confided an innocent girlish romance to her diary. Later on, a certain interesting Englishman, a Captain Heron, had paid his court to her, and then cruelly taken his leave, after having confessed that he adored her; and the Grand Duke Karl August, who had a taste for practical jokes, had, in order to console her for her loss,

Lotte's affaires de cœur.

[1] After having read the excellent and exhaustive description of the family by Palleske, it is impossible to avoid availing one's self of much of the material which this admirable biographer has collected. I therefore willingly acknowledge my indebtedness.

sent her a stuffed heron in a captain's uniform, and recommended her to place it as an ornament in her garden. She wept over the trials of Clarissa Harlowe, and went into raptures over the virtue and chivalry of Sir Charles Grandison. In the solitude and monotony of her daily existence she had expended her girlish affection upon all sorts of imaginary paragons of masculine beauty and excellence; and this romantic tendency was apt to make her excessively generous in her judgments of her male acquaintance, provided they pleased her, while she had a good deal of sport and harmless amusement over those who failed to come up to her standard. She was, on the whole, quick to discover the ludicrous traits in a person, and she had a piquant, girlish way of putting her observations, which made them doubly attractive.

Lotte's appearance.

Judging by the picture of Lotte prefixed to the Cotta edition of her correspondence with Schiller, she could hardly be called a beauty. Her features, however, are clear and well modeled, the expression frank and honest, and one has a suspicion that her smile must have been very winning. One sees easily that she must have spent her life in the country. Her sentiment is as healthy as the color in her cheeks; no spasmodic raptures and affected enthusiasms, but a fresh, warm, and genial nature, sound in its likes and dislikes, and responding eagerly to all that is good and beautiful.

Caroline von Lengefeld.

The elder sister, Caroline, though perhaps intellectually Lotte's superior, makes a less favorable impression. She was, at the time when Schiller made her acquaintance, engaged to a Baron von Beulwitz, to whom she was shortly afterwards married. The latter was a good, commonplace man, who did not comprehend so sensitive and delicately fashioned a creature as his wife, and their marriage accordingly proved very unhappy. Caroline chose Schiller as her confidant, and in his large and hospitable mind sought a refuge from her domestic infe-

licity. She wrote with such extraordinary fluency and grace that a novel of hers, "Agnes von Lilien," published in Schiller's "Horen," was, even by so competent a critic as Friedrich Schlegel, attributed to Goethe. There is in her letters a certain straining for effect, a desire to impress, which contrast strikingly with the naïve heart-effusions of her sister. Her literary ability.

After Schiller's return to Weimar, the thought of Lotte von Lengefeld continued to haunt him. He determined to spend the next summer at Rudolfstadt, in order to become better acquainted with the family. He ventured to communicate this intention to Lotte, and to ask her if she would kindly find him suitable lodgings for the summer. Lotte willingly agreed, and at the end of May (1788) Schiller was her neighbor. In the little village of Volkstädt, on the left bank of the Saale, only a short walk from Rudolfstadt, he found a quiet and comfortable dwelling, where he could work without fear of disturbance. In the evening he would walk over to the Lengefeld mansion, where he was always eagerly welcomed. Usually he carried in his pocket some sheets of manuscript of "Der Geisterseher," which he was vainly striving to conclude, or of "The History of the Revolt of the Netherlands," and read them aloud to the young ladies, frequently soliciting their criticism. Animated discussions on æsthetic and historic themes were thus often occasioned, in which the sisters bore their share bravely. At other times Schiller would bring some favorite book, whose sentiments and peculiarities of expression would then be reflected in their talk, and in the notes they exchanged during the following days. Especially charming is the correspondence which follows the reading of Voss's translation of the Odyssey. Schiller has just been suffering from a violent catarrh, and notes are substituted for personal intercourse. The splendidly sonorous adjectives of Homer are humming and buzzing in Schiller in Volkstädt. Lotte and Caroline as Schiller's critics. Reading of Homer.

Lotte's brain, and she writes as follows to her friend

Homeric note from Lotte.

"Good morning, dear friend. How do you feel to-day? I hope that when the rosy-fingered dawn awoke, you were still slumbering quietly, and that your indisposition may not last long. I thought early this morning that I would willingly have sacrificed a night's sleep, and rejoiced when the dawn found me sleepless, if you could have rested in return. But I have spent a good long time in my daintily timbered bed. I invite you to come and dine with us to-day on dumplings. Mother says that this dish will not disagree with you, and it does not call for any exertion of the teeth. Be so kind as to send me the 'Histoire des Favorites.' You may spend the day quietly on the sofa, and we will see if Heaven will inspire us with something bright to say. L."

Schiller also adopts the Homeric tone: "How did you sleep during the night in your dainty bed? Did the sweet sleep visit your dear, gracious eyelids? Tell me this in a few winged words, but I beg of you that you tell me the truth. Lies you will not tell, for you are altogether too intelligent. . . . . What is your sister doing? Are the slippers clattering about her graceful feet, or is she yet lying in the soft, beautifully smoothed bed? If you are not up, then let me know orally how you have spent the night. Let the garden remain open; I have a temptation to walk about there a little. Farewell. S."

Homeric note from Schiller.

Lotte is quick to understand the invitation implied in the request to let the garden gate remain open: "Many thanks for your winged words. My head is easier, and I have slept off my indisposition. The garden is open. So you may come. I hardly think it will be injurious to me if I too walk about there a little. If it is not good for me, then my physician will send me home, won't he? Adieu; we shall see each other soon. L."

Lotte promises to keep the garden gate open.

Thus the happy summer passed. Late in the autumn Schiller again returned to Weimar. His external position had now considerably improved, although a chronic impecuniosity was still among his direst trials. His "Revolt of the Netherlands," which was appearing in Wieland's "Deutscher Merkur," was attracting great attention; and a poem lately published, "Die Götter Griechenlands" ("The Gods of Greece"), had aroused much enthusiasm among the younger generation, and a great alarm in the orthodox camp.

"The Gods of Greece."

"The Gods of Greece" is the manifesto of artistic paganism, an æsthetic protest against Christianity. As a step in the ladder of Schiller's poetic regeneration this poem is highly significant. Quite independently of Goethe, while the latter is in Italy discovering the meaning of the Greek civilization, Schiller is, without any direct contemplation to assist him, by pure intuition making a similar discovery. The poet regrets that the cheerful sensuality of the ancient civilization, with its splendor of form and color, has been banished from the world;[1] then nothing was sacred except

[1] The following lines express in pregnant images the import and tendency of the poem: —

Finst'rer Ernst und trauriges Entsagen
War aus eurem heitern Dienst verbannt,
Glücklich sollten alle Herzen schlagen,
Denn euch war der Glückliche verwandt.
Damals war nichts heilig als das Schöne,
Keiner Freude schämte sich der Gott,
Wo die keusch erröthende Caraöne,
Wo die Grazie gebot. . . . .
Schöne Welt, wo bist du, kehre wieder,
Holdes Blüthenalter der Natur!
Ach, nur in dem Feenland der Lieder
Lebt noch deine fabelhafte Spur.
Ausgestorben trauert das Gefilde,
Keine Gottheit zeigt sich meinem Blick.
Ach! von jenem lebenwarmen Bilde
Blieb der Schatten nur zurück.
. . . . . .
Ja, sie kehrten heim und alles Schöne,
Alles Hohe nahmen sie mit fort,
Alle Farben, alle Lebenstöne,
Und uns blieb nur das entseelte Wort.

what was beautiful. "No terrible skeleton stood before the bed of the dying; a kiss caught the last breath from his lips; a *genius* reversed his torch."

The poem un-Christian, but not anti-Christian.

No one will seriously maintain that this beautiful elegy is meant as a protest against any single doctrine of Christianity, far less against its moral code. But a poet may well deplore the inevitable loss of all that was poetically noble and exalted in the antique world. He may rationally concede that the present civilization is in its totality an incomparably higher one, and yet, in his capacity of poet, shed a tear because Phœbus no longer rules in the heavens, because the lovely nymphs and naiads have deserted their forests and streams, because mortals no longer bring their innocent garlands of flowers to the temple of Venus Amathusia. If, however, a controversial purpose (which was far from Schiller's mind) is attributed to the elegy, then it strikes not only at religion, but at science and the whole structure of modern society.

A great advance upon "The Anthology."

In the purity and richness of its diction "The Gods of Greece" shows an enormous advance on all that Schiller had previously produced. There is no trace of that emotional debauchery which disfigured the poems of "The Anthology," while the beautiful warmth and rhapsodic intensity which gave such a charm to those youthful lyrics have, as yet, suffered no abatement. There are not, as in many of his later and more ambitious poems, philosophical subtleties and laborious intricacies of thought to interfere with our pleasure; a pure and sweet lyrical key is sustained from beginning to end, and no single discordant note mars the grand and simple harmony.

"Die Künstler" ("The Artists").

Schiller's next poem, "Die Künstler" ("The Artists"), suffers sensibly from the abstractness of the ideas which it strives to embody. It is a further elaboration, though in paler and more rhetorical language, of a thought closely akin to that of "The Gods

of Greece," but with all its purity of form and imagery, it is essentially didactic in its tendency, and therefore less impressive than its predecessor.

Goethe's return from Italy.

June 18, 1788, Goethe returned from his Italian journey. Schiller, who was full of honest admiration for the greatest poet of his time, had expected his arrival with an almost feverish impatience. I have told in another chapter of their first meeting, of Goethe's rigid reserve, of Schiller's disappointment, and of their final union in a warm and noble friendship. The Lengefeld sisters, to whom Goethe was little less than a demi-god, were bitterly grieved at the result of their first interviews, and were half inclined to reproach Schiller for having failed to impress Goethe as a desirable friend and companion. How modestly Schiller estimates himself, as compared to Goethe, is beautifully shown in a letter to Körner of September 12, 1788, in which he tries to formulate the impression which his great rival had made upon him: "With all its earnestness, his face has an air of kindness and benevolence. His complexion is dark, and he looked to me older than, according to my calculation, he can be. His voice is extremely agreeable, his conversation animated and full of *esprit;* it is a great pleasure to listen to him. . . . . Our acquaintance was soon made, and without the least awkwardness. . . . . On the whole, my exalted notion of him has not suffered by a personal acquaintance, but I doubt if we can ever approach each other very closely. Much which to me is still interesting, which I still have to desire and hope for, has already had its day with him; he is so far ahead of me (less in years than in self-development) that we shall never meet again on the way; and his whole character was from the outset designed differently from mine, his world is not mine, and our views seem to be essentially different."

Letter from Schiller to Körner, concerning Goethe.

IX.

IN the beginning of December, 1788, appeared Schiller's "History of the Revolt of the Netherlands." It was everywhere well received, and had a rapid sale. The learned and official world, which refused to regard poems and dramas in a serious light, now suddenly discovered that the turbulent young poet had the stuff for a scholar in him, and that he might perhaps be usefully employed in some solid, scholarly work. Accordingly a semi-official inquiry was addressed to Schiller, whether he would be willing to accept a professorship in history at the University of Jena, and, as after some hesitation he replied in the affirmative, his appointment soon followed. As the time aproached, however, when he was to assume his professorial duties he began to feel an ever greater aversion for his new dignity, and neither Lotte's nor Körner's arguments could quite reconcile him to the loss of his liberty. The only thing which was at all pleasant about the whole affair was the fact that he had reason to suppose that he owed his appointment to Goethe.

Publication of "The Revolt of the Netherlands."

Appointment to a professorship in Jena.

"In this new position," he writes to Lotte, "I shall appear ridiculous to myself. Many a student probably knows more history than the professor. However, I think in this case as Sancho Panza did about his vice-regency: when God gives an office to a man, He also gives him intelligence to administer it."

Note to Lotte concerning the professorship.

May 26, 1789, he delivered his first lecture. He had modestly chosen rather a small lecture room, which immediately was filled to overflowing. The hall, the stairs, and

the lower vestibule were crowded, and still the students kept arriving. Schiller then dismissed his audience, and asked them to repair to the largest lecture room in the university. Any one who has seen a crowd of German students engaged in a scramble for seats can imagine the scene which now ensued. Every one was anxious to secure the front seats in the larger hall. With a terrible noise they stormed down the stairs and out into the street; the citizens became frightened; they supposed the university was on fire. People rushed up to inquire what had happened. "The new professor is to lecture," shouted some breathless student as he hurried on. Also in the new *auditorium*, which would hold four hundred, every seat was occupied, and even in the windows and on the *subsellia* the eager sons of the Muses reclined. Schiller was received with the usual stamping, which is the academic way of manifesting approval; the lecture was listened to with the closest attention. The sight of the great multitude was very inspiring to the new-fledged professor; he began to feel perfectly at his ease, and the hearty good will of the young men, which he felt as a palpable influence on entering the room, gave him confidence in his future as an academic teacher.

Schiller's first lecture in Jena.

Success of the lecture.

Schiller's professorship was not a salaried office; like many of his colleagues, he was dependent upon the fees collected from the students who at the beginning of the term signified their intention to attend his lectures. After his triumphant beginning, Schiller might be justified in expecting a very considerable sum from this source; but as soon as they were required to pay, the young gentlemen became less demonstrative; only thirty remained, of whom ten paid the required fee. Schiller was greatly discouraged, especially as he had to spend much of his time in preparation for these lectures which brought him such pitiful returns. The same amount of time, he reasoned, spent in literary occupation,

Not a salaried position.

Discouraging experiences.

would bring him far greater profits, both materially and spiritually. He began to chafe against the chains which he had voluntarily assumed, and yearned again to be free.

Lotte, we have seen, had earnestly persuaded Schiller to accept the Jena professorship. It afforded, at all events, a secure and honorable position, and there was always a chance of an advancement to something better. No doubt her argument had great weight with the man who seemed to have staked his future happiness upon the chance of gaining her love. Their courtship was certainly a highly intellectual one: Schiller sends books and letters by a messenger, and Lotte and Caroline in long, serious epistles give their opinions on what they have read. Caroline goes into raptures over metaphysics and mathematics, underscores bountifully, and entangles herself occasionally in learned intricacies of thought and expression. Lotte is delightfully fresh, simple, and straightforward; she too reads books, like Montesquieu's "Esprit des Lois," Frederick the Great's "Histoire de mon Temps," "Théâtre des Grecs," the Fables of Lafontaine, etc., translates Ossian, and struggles ineffectually to render Pope's "Essay on Man" into German verse. At last Schiller declares orally to Caroline his love for her sister, and Caroline thinks she has read Lotte's heart truly, and assures Schiller that his love is returned. A few days later Lotte, in a very charming little letter, in response to one of Schiller's, confirms Caroline's testimony and engages herself to him:—

An intellectual courtship.

Schiller is engaged to Lotte.

"The thought that I can contribute to your happiness stands bright and radiant before my soul. If faithful, heart-felt love and friendship can accomplish this, then the warm wish of my heart, to see you happy, will be fulfilled.

"Your faithful

"LOTTE."

Schiller has been justly blamed for the impartiality with which he divided his affection between the two sisters. His love-letters are usually addressed to both of them, and the ever-recurring plural (*Ihr* and *Euch* instead of *Du*, *Dir*, and *Dich*) makes an unpleasant impression. He even frequently concludes with embraces and kisses to both, and tries, rather sophistically, to convince his betrothed, who now and then becomes a little alarmed, that this triple alliance of affection is more perfect and beautiful than it could have been if the sister were wanting. Caroline satisfies his intellect, Lotte his heart. He even seems for a time to have contemplated having Caroline always with him. But fortunately for all, this arrangement was not carried out. Nevertheless there can be no doubt that he loved Lotte sincerely, and her alone. Caroline, who in her domestic infelicity needed a staunch and faithful friend, clung tenaciously to him; upon the intellectual altitudes whither he led her, she was less oppressed by the consciousness of her unhappy relation to her husband. After Schiller's marriage, however, the confusion of his feelings was soon cleared up; Caroline entered into a new relation with her cousin, Wilhelm von Wolzogen, whom she subsequently married, after having procured a divorce from Herr von Beulwitz.

A triple alliance.

Schiller's relation to Caroline von Lengefeld.

During his growing intimacy with the Lengefeld sisters, Schiller's affection for Frau von Kalb had gradually cooled. He was not skilled in hypocrisy, and, dreading embarrassing scenes, he avoided her. After his removal to Jena he continued to correspond with her, but with her keen susceptibility she cannot have failed to detect that she no longer held the first place in his heart. Whether to ward off her suspicion, or to gain time, the desperate remedy suggested itself to him of establishing a friendly intimacy between her and Lotte. But Frau von Kalb declined. How could she open her passionate heart to that young and inexperienced girl? To increase her

Rupture between Schiller and Frau von Kalb.

misery her sight began to fail, and she was threatened with total blindness. Her husband had squandered the greater part of her property, and she saw little prospect of saving what was still left. In the mean while the news of Schiller's engagement, although not yet publicly announced, was becoming an open secret, and at last reached Frau von Kalb. It was a hard blow to her. She wrote to him, demanding back her letters. The disagreeable duty could no longer be postponed; their meeting was a very painful one, and passionate reproaches must have been exchanged, judging by the feelings which each cherished for the other during the time immediately following. Later the wound was gradually healed, and in the course of years a friendly relation was again established.

Schiller's marriage.

February 22, 1790, Schiller was married to Lotte von Lengefeld. The Duke of Weimar had, on the poet's application, allowed him an annual salary of two hundred thalers, which, with his literary income and his lecture fees, would enable him to support his frugal household.

X.

IT was eminently true, as Körner said, that Schiller was more valuable to the University of Jena than the University of Jena was to him. Even though he might be wanting in the knowledge of those *minutiæ* of scholarship in which German professors delight, he possessed other and far more essential qualifications for his position, which the majority of his learned colleagues lacked. In the first place, he was an impressive personality, a man of large and noble views, whose thoughts had a sweep and grandeur which made them resound through many years in the memories of his hearers. To have seen Schiller, to have talked with him, to have heard him lecture,— how many a German youth has carried this proud consciousness with him through life, and perhaps been a better and a worthier man for it! A number of students dined at his house, and readily attached themselves to him. Lotte was an admirable housewife, and made his home pleasant and attractive. In several of the young men she took a motherly interest, which she kept up even after they had left the university.

Schiller's qualifications as a professor

Relations with the students.

Schiller was at this time laboring with tireless energy on a new work, "The History of the Thirty Years' War." In his efforts to rid himself of the debts he had contracted during his early youth, and to provide a comfortable home for his young wife, he forgot that his physical strength was already impaired by a former illness, and could not bear the great strain to which he subjected it. Lotte warned, but her warnings were not heeded. So

Excessive industry.

many brilliant literary projects crowded his brain, and demanded immediate attention. It is said that he was daily occupied fourteen hours in writing and lecturing. The inevitable result followed; in the winter of 1790–1791 he was taken seriously ill. First came a prolonged attack of rheumatic fever; then, after a partial recovery, a relapse, followed during the next summer by violent spasms and a nervous prostration, from which he never completely recovered. Schiller bore his sufferings with heroic fortitude. In his sleepless nights he continued to busy himself with his poetic and historic plans; in spite of his physical debility, material accumulated on his hands, and the first moments of convalescence were then employed in bringing it into salable shape. A journey to the watering-place Karlsbad was proposed, and Körner eagerly volunteered to defray the expense; but Schiller, fearing that he could never repay these nominal loans, refused to take further advantage of his friend's generosity. It is touching to see how the modest Körner almost brags of his extraordinary prosperity, in order to induce Schiller to reconsider his refusal; but Schiller is not to be prevailed upon. From his "Revolt of the Netherlands," and other literary enterprises, he had succeeded in saving enough to enable him to undertake the journey to Karlsbad without accepting gifts or borrowing. He could not close his eyes, however, to the fact that his strength was broken; and it appears from his letters that he was not sanguine of recovery. He foresaw that his life must henceforth be a hard hand-to-hand battle with disease; and yet his courage did not fail him. He firmly resolved to avail himself of whatever strength he had left in the noblest manner, and the thought of abandoning the struggle and trusting to the generosity of his friends for his support never for a moment occurred to him. Nevertheless, when a helping hand was extended to him, why should he not grasp it? One of his most ardent admirers was the Danish poet Bag-

Serious illness.

Körner's generosity.

gesen, who, after his return to his native land from a journey in Germany, employed much of his time in making propaganda for Schiller. Among those whom he approached were the Duke of Augustenborg and Count Schimmelmann, who, when they heard of the poet's illness and his hard struggle with poverty, offered him a pension of one thousand thalers annually for three years. This was a welcome relief to Schiller; he could now give himself up joyously to his literary pursuits, without having the *atra cura* ever knocking at his door and reminding him that he had a family to maintain.

Baggesen's veneration for Schiller.

A pension from the Duke of Augustenborg and Count Schimmelmann.

In the autumn of 1792 Schiller received a visit from his mother and his youngest sister, Nanette, and during the following summer he himself, with his wife, visited his old home in Würtemberg. He found his father still a robust and active man, and many of his old friends from the academy hastened to greet him. One of them, Wilhelm von Hoven, gives the following description of Schiller's personal appearance:[1] "His youthful fire had been tempered; there was much more dignity in his bearing; a certain proper elegance had taken the place of his former *nonchalance*, and his spare figure, his pale sickly face, made the interesting impression of his appearance complete. Unfortunately the pleasure of our intercourse was frequently, almost daily, interrupted by his attacks of illness, but in the hours when he felt better, how abundantly he poured forth the wealth of his spirit; how affectionate his soft, sympathetic heart then showed itself; how visibly his noble character expressed itself in all his speech and actions; how proper was even his mirth, which formerly had been somewhat wanton; how dignified were even his jests! In short, he had become a perfect man."

Visit to Würtemberg.

Schiller's appearance as described by Von Hoven.

During a temporary residence in Ludwigsburg a son was

[1] Quoted from Palleske: Zweiter Band, pp. 244, 245.

born to the poet. Like most young fathers he had golden visions of the future of this miraculous little creature, whom he vowed to educate in strict accordance with the educational precepts of Quinctilian. May 15, 1794, the family returned to Jena.

Birth of a son.

The most important direct result of Schiller's didactic activity at the university is perhaps his "History of the Thirty Years' War," which first appeared in the "Pocket Calendar for Ladies," during the years 1790–93. Like the "Revolt of the Netherlands" it is an exceedingly entertaining book, written with a vivacity and rhetorical impressiveness which are probably more delightful to the uninitiated reader than to the professional historian. In Germany, where any attempt to popularize a science, or any serious branch of learning, has until quite recently been looked upon as a very unworthy proceeding, it has, since Niebuhr pronounced his verdict of absolute condemnation upon Schiller as a historian, been the fashion either to ignore him or to sneer at him in this capacity;[1] perhaps more frequently the former, because Schiller is too dear to the German heart to make it quite safe for any one to belittle him.

"History of the Thirty Years' War."

It is not to be denied that, as a historian, Schiller has long ago been superseded by men like Niebuhr, Mommsen, and Ranke, and it would hardly occur to any one at the present day to consult him as an historic authority. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that his

Schiller as a historian.

[1] Julian Schmidt (*Geschichte der Deutschen Nationalliteratur*, Bd. i., p. 240) gives Schiller credit for a wonderful gift of divination, but asserts, not without reason, that he hides the deficiency of his knowledge under a cloak of sonorous rhetoric. Gottschall (Bd. i., p. 89) indorses Niebuhr's verdict in regard to "The Thirty Years' War," but admits that Schiller has greatly influenced the style of later historians. Gervinus (Bd. v., pp. 410–413) deals justly and generously with the faults of Schiller's historic method, but calls attention to the fact that Schiller was himself the first to recognize his own deficiencies. He pitied the future historian who should come to him for information. Palleske lavishes undiscriminating and uncritical praise upon Schiller's historic writings.

labors in this direction have not been without important results. These very authorities, whose superiority to himself he would himself cheerfully have recognized, are in a measure his debtors. For he was, among Germans, the first to combat the idea that dullness and a confused heaviness of style were inherent characteristics of so-called learned works. If he achieved nothing higher in his "History of the Thirty Years' War," he at all events brilliantly illustrated, to use his own words, "that history may be written with historic fidelity without being a strain on the reader's patience," and that "history may borrow something from a kindred art without necessarily becoming a romance." Outside of Germany, there were perhaps few nations in Europe who required to be taught so impressively that an artistic style was not incompatible with sound scholarship; but the Germans needed it, and they have been wise enough to profit by the lesson.

Brilliancy of style not incompatible with scholarship.

Schiller's characterizations are full of fine descriptive touches, and often display a profound insight. Thus the portraits of Philip II., Egmont, and William of Orange in "The Revolt of the Netherlands," and those of Gustavus Adolphus and Wallenstein in "The History of the Thirty Years' War," seem, to one who lays no claim to special scholarship, both psychologically interesting, artistically complete, and historically convincing. The author's chief weakness lies in his tendency to declamation; the outlines then become blurred, and the picture loses its distinctness. Where Schiller relates, he relates clearly and vividly; where he reflects, the rhapsodist often gets the better of the scholar. He becomes vague, and displays a taste for hyperbolical phraseology, which excites distrust.

Schiller's characterizations.

Both before and after the completion of "The History of the Thirty Years' War," which proved a great success, Schiller undertook several historic compilations, of very slight value, once even lending

Historic compilations.

his name to an enterprise with which his connection was merely nominal. Various historical subjects attracted him, and many ambitious projects were continually haunting his busy brain. Once he thought of writing a history of Rome; then an epic on Gustavus Adolphus, and another whose hero was to be Frederick the Great, were projected; between 1788 and 1790 the idea of writing a German Plutarch steadily occupied him; and his interest in the Thirty Years' War naturally led to a desire to write a history of the Reformation. Had his health permitted it, some of these plans would no doubt have been carried out. But the Muse is a jealous mistress; she did not permit her lover to stray any longer in the barren fields of scholarship. She reclaimed him ere it was too late, and bade him employ his waning strength in her service.

Projected histories and epics.

XI.

WE have seen that Schiller had a Gothic youth, as well as Goethe, and that he underwent similar processes of artistic regeneration. Like Goethe, he continually outgrew himself, and looked with pitying impatience upon the works into which he had, not long ago, infused the hot vigor of his turbulent, youthful soul. In "The Gods of Greece" he had anticipated the artistic ideal for which he yearned, and now, in spite of sickness and the sure doom of a not distant death, he labored calmly and unweariedly for its attainment. Hard as his fate was, he bore it with cheerful resignation, — no complaints, no tearful recital of his sufferings, no unmanly craving for sympathy. And nothing can be more supremely characteristic of this unflagging devotion to lofty aims than the following incident, related by Palleske:[1] —

Schiller's artistic regeneration.

"It is very affecting to see how this man, with death in his bosom, does not shun weather or distance, for the sake of testing, with his friend Körner, the results of their common speculations. Körner, traveling to look after some family interest, was prevented from coming to Jena, but Schiller made him promise at least to meet him in Weissenfels; and here these two men disputed for a day and a half with Roman fearlessness, while Hannibal was standing before their gates, concerning the idea of the beautiful, and concerning the possibility of rousing in the German nation the consciousness of the ideal man dwelling within it."

Discussion with Körner concerning the idea of true beauty.

In the correspondence with Goethe, similar questions are

[1] Bd. ii., p. 324.

continually being brought up for discussion, and in consequence of this thorough æsthetic preparation the poetic germs in the minds of both begin during the following years to sprout, and at length to blossom in immortal poems and dramas. Now it is Goethe who seeks Schiller, to dispute with him about Kantian philosophy, although, as is well known, he hated all philosophy, except Spinoza's, while Schiller derived much satisfaction from the study of Kant. Then there is an incessant interchange of manuscripts; mutual judgments, always sincere and deliberate; consultations regarding the advisability of accepting or rejecting this or that contribution to "Die Horen;" criticism of common friends and enemies, etc. A very vivid glimpse of their respective habits of life is afforded by Goethe's letter of September 4th, inviting Schiller to visit him, and the latter's reply, in which he accepts the invitation, on condition that he may have the privilege of being ill during his visit. He must be allowed to sleep late in the morning, because his cramps deprive him of all rest during the night; he must have the liberty to isolate himself completely whenever his physical condition demands it; and he must have the assurance that no one is to be inconvenienced by this necessary irregularity of his life.

Correspondence of Goethe and Schiller.

Letter of invitation from Goethe, and Schiller's reply.

In a previous chapter,[1] an account has been given of the plan of "Die Horen" (The Horæ, The Hours); of the hostility which it aroused among the critics, and Schiller's final abandonment of the enterprise in 1798. The "Thalia" had been abandoned since 1793. The epigrammatic warfare[2] against mediocrity and cant, which the two friends undertook in common, and carried to such a triumphant issue, has also been treated of in a former chapter. The name of "Der Musenalmanach," which appeared annually from 1796–1800 under Schiller's editorship, calls to mind the

"Die Horen" (The Horæ).

"Die Thalia."

"Der Musenalmanach."

[1] Goethe: chap. x., pp. 85, 86. [2] Goethe: *Die Xenien*, pp. 94–97.

most splendid era of German song. Here appeared Schiller's noblest lyrics, epigrams, ballads, and elegies, — "Die Kraniche von Ibykus," "Das Lied von der Glocke," "Der Spaziergang," "Die Xenien," etc., — and many of Goethe's most wondrous lyrical creations. Nevertheless the enterprise was not successful, and in the year 1800, when the last issue had appeared, Schiller in a letter to Körner congratulated himself that henceforth he should, at all events, have nothing to do with any poet worse than himself.

The artistic progress of Goethe and Schiller compared.

If we compare the youthful odes to Laura, with all their astronomical immensity and rhetorical convulsions, to the clear, plastic perfection and well-graded dramatic progress of these later ballads and songs, the change which the poet must have undergone during the intervening years becomes strikingly apparent. In its general tendency this change coincided with the artistic growth which Goethe experienced during his sojourn in Italy, but in Schiller's case the process was less instinctive, more conscious, and perhaps not entirely completed at the time when his earnest and beautiful life was ended.

The effect of Schiller's historical and philosophical studies.

Schiller owed to his historical studies and to Kant's philosophy what Goethe acquired through his study of nature and the direct contemplation of the antique. By a wide survey of the grand arena of human action, Schiller gained that calm equilibrium of spirit which his friend had acquired by what, at times, appeared like a Buddhistic absorption in the immensity of nature. Both discovered, in different ways, approximately, their relation to the universe, — a discovery which but few men ever make. Nevertheless, if once even remotely and dimly seen, this gradual unveiling of perplexing mysteries, this gradual discovery of something like proportion, however vast the distance, between ourselves and the universe that surrounds us, gives a confidence to the mind, a tranquil heroism which trembles at no imagined danger, and looks the real one fearlessly in the eye.

The contemplation of anything so infinitely greater than ourselves, of which we are nevertheless the result, instead of humiliating, dignifies us, and becomes an unfailing source of happiness. Hence Schiller's fortitude and proud perseverance in his labor, while he felt death already creeping nearer and nearer to his heart.

His study of Greek literature in translations.

We have seen that he had already discovered the beauty of the ancient Greek world before he became acquainted with Goethe. As a boy he had hardly mastered the Greek grammar, far less gained a lasting impression of any Greek classic. Nevertheless, by means of Voss's translation of Homer, and French translations of the Greek dramatists, he succeeded in reconstructing in his mind the joyous existence of the Greeks with a vividness and a poetic consistency which are truly surprising. And yet, as he was well aware, he had lost the finest flavor of that splendidly sonorous and melodious tongue. The unnaturalness of the restraints to which he had been subjected in his childhood and early youth had inspired him with a vehement hunger for nature, by which, like Rousseau, he understood absence of civilization; but by his historical and philosophical studies this crude, youthful ideal was purified and exalted. The nature which he now strove to approach was no longer the fictitious felicity and innocence of the savage state, but a natural civilization, — a civilization ennobled and regenerated by culture and art, and untrammeled by artificial beliefs and prejudices. The nearest approach to such a civilization which the world had ever seen he believed he had found in Athens during the Periclean era. It is easy to see how this common admiration of classical Hellenism, and the common effort to realize in themselves the beautiful Greek ideal of manhood, must have been a strong bond of union between Goethe and Schiller. With all their individual differences, their works are henceforth animated

Idea of nature before and after his classical regeneration.

Their admiration of the Greeks a strong bond of union between Goethe and Schiller.

by a similar spirit, and the same noble purity of style is manifest in both. They had both drunk of the same Hippocrene, and were both climbing, though from different sides, the same lofty Parnassus. Another friend who also in many ways furthered Schiller's artistic growth, and by his cultivated taste and sympathetic criticism facilitated his progress toward the classic ideal, was Wilhelm von Humboldt, the brother of the famous naturalist, Alexander. Humboldt lived for several years in Jena, and was Schiller's daily companion.

Wilhelm von Humboldt.

To Goethe it was never essential to have any theory or definitely formulated creed for his artistic activity. His method was purely creative, and as such but half conscious. With a divine spontaneity and ease he found the exact form which his subject demanded, and, previous to his acquaintance with Schiller rarely thought of reasoning about it. With Schiller the case was different. His method was primarily analytical. He always rendered himself a clear account of what he desired to do; reasoned, experimented, rejected, and at length chose with a deliberate purpose the form which he finally adopted. It is thus easily explained why, after he had arrived at fixed convictions and formulated his artistic creed to his satisfaction, his productivity increased, and the poetic wealth of his thought poured itself forth with a fullness and force which appeared astounding even to the poet himself. The year 1797 was especially fertile in magnificent creations. The two authors seem to have entered into a friendly competition, each spurring the other on by his generous praise and admiration.

Schiller's method of work as compared to that of Goethe.

1797, — the year of ballads.

Schiller had been seized with a desire to write ballads, and his example aroused a similar ambition in his friend. It may be ungenerous under such circumstances to institute comparisons, but it is undeniable that *as ballads* Goethe's productions from this

Goethe's and Schiller's ballads compared.

period are superior to those of Schiller. The warm simplicity, the touchingly naïve turns of expression, and above all the weird and fantastic element of the ballad were inherent in Goethe's nature, but could hardly be reproduced by Schiller's constructive reasoning. Nevertheless, Schiller is not devoid of poetic intuition: the splendor of his thought warms him up; the phrase is moulded with the finest sense for rhythm and melody; the action is hurried on with superb dramatic effect; and the result, if not a ballad, is a grand and noble poem.

Schiller's treatment of popular traditions.

Where Schiller deals with popular traditions, which have always been the peculiar province of the ballad, he is not always satisfied with telling his story: there is frequently a suspicion of a moral lurking somewhere; the characters become burdened with a typical significance; and a weighty thought or reflection at times usurps the interest which should have been centred in the action. An opening of such beautiful freshness and simplicity as Goethe's "*Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind?*"[1] would hardly have occurred to Schiller. In "The Ring of Polykrates," a story borrowed from Herodotus, there is scarcely any action, and the didactic contents, with the very pointed moral, are, properly speaking, what constitutes the poem. The thought, however, of the envy of the gods is an exclusively Greek one, and has no modern application. In "The Cranes of Ibykus" the narrative is also interspersed with reflection; the cranes, witnessing the murder of the poet, assume the *rôle* of a Nemesis, and become the means of the detection of the murderers. The antique *Fatum* rules; man is but a blind tool in the hands of the gods. In "The Walk to the Forge" ("Der Gang nach dem Eisenhammer") this Fate is christianized; it is a just Providence which protects innocence, and punishes the wicked slanderer.

"The Ring of Polykrates."

"The Cranes of Ibykus."

"The Walk to the Forge."

[1] *Der Erlkönig.*

To an apparently different class belongs "The Diver" ("Der Taucher"), which is but a beautiful poetic tale, simply and effectively told; each phrase has a descriptive vigor and a clear, plastic conciseness which have hardly ever been rivaled in the German language. As a piece of picturesque description, what can be finer and stronger than this?— "The Diver."

> "*Und es wallet und siedet und brauset und zischt,*
> *Wie wenn Wasser mit Feuer sich mengt,*
> *Bis zum Himmel spritzet der dampfende Gischt,*
> *Und Fluth auf Fluth sich ohn' Ende drängt,*
> *Und will sich nimmer erschöpfen und leeren,*
> *Als wollte das Meer noch ein Meer gebären.*"

The nearest approach to a genuine ballad which Schiller has ever written is "Knight Toggenburg" ("Ritter Toggenburg"), where he seems to have struck the right key, and resisted the temptation to elaborate his simple theme in brilliant variations. "Knight Toggenburg."

"The Song of the Bell" ("Das Lied von der Glocke"), the best known of all Schiller's poems, was suggested to him during a visit in Rudolfstadt, while he was inspecting a bell foundry. He carried the idea with him for many years, until at last, in 1799, he believed he had found the proper form. "The Song of the Bell" is one of those poems which may be said to have suffered by their popularity. Like Longfellow's "Psalm of Life" and Poe's "Raven" with us, it is the first theme upon which the youthful orator of the primary school exercises his declamatory powers. Therefore, to most Germans, it has lost all meaning, being somehow associated in their thought with their early educational sufferings in the gymnasium. The poem is didactic in tone, but the moral is so skillfully interwoven with the story that it nowhere becomes obstrusive. Schiller has seized the most dramatic points in the life of man, both civic and private, from the cradle to the very grave; but what first made the poem so "The Song of the Bell." Its popularity.

popular was, no doubt, its warm national coloring. It is life as it manifests itself in Germany, and especially among the respectable middle classes of Germany, which the poet lets pass in vivid panoramic views before our eyes. The diction is strong and simple, and nowhere above the worthy master, into whose mouth it is put; the sentiment is dignified, serious, and tender.

National coloring.

XII.

SCHILLER'S study for "The History of the Thirty Years' War" naturally attracted his attention to the character of Wallenstein. In 1796, about nine years after the completion of "Don Carlos," he began to master the material sufficiently to warrant him in going to work. In March, 1799, the tragedy of "Wallenstein" was finished, and again revised for the press in 1800. "Wallenstein."

"Wallenstein" is a trilogy consisting of "Wallenstein's Lager," "Die Piccolomini," and "Wallenstein's Tod." The first part ("Wallenstein's Camp") is a kind of prologue, introducing the various classes of soldiery of which Wallenstein's army consisted. Immediately you are made to feel the power of the mighty man who can sway these turbulent elements and bend them under the iron rod of his merciless discipline. The free and easy devil-may-care existence of the camp is vividly illustrated by the little snatches of personal history which are incidentally given, for instance, in the talk between the female sutler and the first chasseur, and again between the latter and the cavalry sergeant. The indignant tirades of the Capuchin, interspersed with bad puns, in the manner of Abraham à Santa Clara, the Croatian's barter of a necklace for a cap, the episode with the peasant and the loaded dice, are of the most convincing realism, and place the camp almost visibly before us. "Wallenstein's Camp."

We know from Schiller's correspondence with Goethe and Körner how long and earnestly he struggled with the character of his hero before he succeeded in investing it with a tragic dignity and The character of Wallenstein.

interest. The historical Wallenstein fell by his own guilt, and his motives for the guilt seemed small and sordid. Ambition and thirst for vengeance could hardly be exalted into tragic motives. Yet, although Schiller for a long time failed to discover any trace of nobleness in Wallenstein, the character had a strong fascination for him, and he was unable to dismiss it. In the general's astrological superstitions he at last discovered a fertile *motif*. Wallenstein becomes a traitor to his emperor, not so much by a conscious predetermined act, as by a fatal concatenation of events. He fondly plays with the thought of treason; he glories inwardly in having the power and the opportunity to force the emperor to do his will; but he never formulates this thought into a definite resolution. It seems that there is a fatality even in the guilty desire. Wallenstein, in order to test the extent of his power and opportunity, *in case* he should determine to break openly with the emperor, has entered into negotiations with the Swedes, under Oxenstiern. At the court in Vienna he is suspected of disloyalty; his enemies are active in blackening his name. Sesina, his secret messenger to the Swedes, is captured, and he stands convicted of an intention which he would perhaps never have carried out.

The complication of motives.

Circumstances which force Wallenstein to treason.

> "Nicht herzustellen mehr ist das Vertrau'n
> Und mag ich handeln, wie ich will, ich werde
> Ein Land'sverräther ihnen sein und bleiben.
> Und kehr' ich noch so ehrlich auch zurück
> Zu meiner Pflicht, es wird mir nicht mehr helfen —
> . . . . . .
> "Bei'm grossen Gott des Himmels! Es war nicht
> Mein Ernst, beschloss'ne Sache war es nie.
> In dem Gedanken nur gefiel ich mir;
> Die Freiheit reizte mich und das Vermögen."

Wallenstein then is forced to commit the treasonable deed because he has nourished the treasonable thought. That is a superb conception, and worthy of the greatest tragic poet.

Questenberg, the emperor's diplomatic agent, arrives in the camp, and demands that he shall lay down his command. He knows that the army is devoted to him; he has, by various benefits, — some of a questionable character, — attached his officers to his person. With his army he seems invincible; without it, his destruction is certain, for the emperor would surely not fail to visit his vengeance upon him. Then, further to complicate the tragic situation, comes Wallenstein's superstitious trust in the stars. When all considerations of prudence urge to a prompt decision and deed, he sits waiting for a favorable constellation; and what is still more pathetic, the stars bind him to his direst enemy, Octavio Piccolomini, who, in the shelter of his secure friendship and confidence, secretly works his ruin. How deeply this hallucination is rooted in his mind becomes evident in the magnificent scene in the astrological tower, where he is informed of the capture of Sesina, and in the scene where he relates to Illo the dream he had on the night before the battle of Lützen, when Fate itself had pointed out Octavio to him as his most faithful follower.

Wallenstein's astrological superstitions.

One cannot help wondering where a poet who spent all his life in small towns, and never mingled in civic or political action, can have gained the marvelous insight into affairs, and the astonishing knowledge of the world, which are displayed in every scene of this noble tragedy. That his poetic intuition would help him to reconstruct vividly the astrological scenes, with all their fantastic and plausible mixture of sense and nonsense, need not surprise us; and it is very characteristic of the extreme conscientiousness with which he attended to the smallest detail of his work that he employed Körner in reading certain astrological books for him in a Dresden library, in order that he might get the gist of them within a small compass. For, being always ill, he had to economize his strength, and Körner was only too happy to lighten his

Marvelous insight and knowledge of the world displayed by the poet.

labor. But as we marvel at that subtle flavor of Venice which pervades "Othello" and "The Merchant of Venice," so we may, with equal justice, impute to Schiller a gift of poetic second-sight or divination when he, a man of peace, makes us breathe the very air of the camp, conducts diplomatic intrigues with supreme *finesse*, and introduces us, as it were, bodily into the midst of the whole stupendous confusion of the Thirty Years' War. That oily diplomatic intriguer, Questenberg, — what a capital character! And the bluff Colonel Butler, who, having risen from the ranks, is haunted by a desire to become a count! Then the shrewd and sensible Illo, the deceitful and ambitious Terzky, and the brave, open, and honorable Max Piccolomini, — all splendidly human physiognomies, which once seen are not soon forgotten!

The realistic vigor of "Wallenstein."

Almost all the critics of Schiller have called attention to the subtlety with which Butler's revengefulness is employed as a dramatic *motif*. Wallenstein, in order to attach Butler firmly to himself, induces the emperor's minister to insult him. Butler is hungering to avenge the wrong, and at last discovers that Wallenstein himself was the real author of the insult. His wrath then turns with increased energy against the latter, and he resolves to murder him. The vengeance which Wallenstein had aroused and intended to profit by becomes his own destroyer.

Butler's revengefulness as a dramatic *motif*.

A sub-intrigue, which comes very near being a separate drama within the drama, is the relation of Wallenstein's daughter, Thekla, to Max Piccolomini. Max had been her escort and that of her mother when they were summoned to the camp. The Countess Terzky, in order to bind Max firmly to Wallenstein, when the critical moment shall have arrived, apparently encourages their love for each other. But when the moment of decision comes, Max begs Thekla to decide for him; and she, well capable of a heroic resolution, bids him remain

Thekla and Max Piccolomini.

faithful to his emperor. Max departs, and seeks death in the heat of battle. Thekla, with a maid for her companion, makes a pilgrimage to his grave, and ends her life there.

The style in "Wallenstein."

In its style "Wallenstein" has a massive sculpturesqueness which is marvelously impressive. It is the ideal of a dramatic style. In that grand soliloquy of the hero in the first act of the third part, in the scene with the Swedish general, Wrangel, and above all in the magnificent scene where Wallenstein exhibits himself to his cuirassiers, in order to impress them by his commanding person, the German language seems to have reached the limit of power. To have coupled this Shaksperean realism with such classic purity of diction is surely an achievement worthy of the severe labor and the expenditure of precious vitality which it cost.

"Wallenstein" on the stage.

Great was the eagerness of the theatrical managers to secure "Wallenstein" for their stages. In Weimar the three parts of the trilogy were acted April 15, 17, and 20, 1799, one evening being devoted to each part. During the rehearsals the actors were frequently overcome with emotion, and the effect upon the public was unprecedented. A similar reception greeted the tragedy in all the great cities of Germany. When it appeared in the book trade six large editions were rapidly consumed, although, as usual, a number of piratical reprints lessened the legitimate copyright of the author.

XIII.

SCHILLER'S sixth tragedy, "Maria Stuart," was begun in Jena, June 4, 1799, and completed at the Castle Ettersburg, June 9, 1800. The poet had in the mean while given up his professorship in Jena, and had removed to Weimar. The duke had enabled him to make this long-desired change by raising his annual salary to four hundred thalers, without demanding of him any equivalent in work. The lustre which the presence of the great poet imparted to the Thuringian capital was held to be a sufficient compensation.

Schiller's removal to Weimar.

Schiller's predilection for the Greek drama was something more than an æsthetic theory; all his later tragedies have been influenced by it, and an astonishing amount of ingenuity was expended in inventing historic or modern situations, to which something resembling or corresponding to the antique Fate might be applicable. Where the tragic fate is the result of guilt, or, what amounts to the same, of a certain inherited temperament and character, the spectator's entire sympathy could not, as Schiller thought, be enlisted on the side of the hero. But where the hero, as in the "Prometheus" and the "Antigone," is the victim of Fate, where he suffers and is destroyed because some inexorable power above him demands his destruction, there the spectator's heart is moved with sympathy and admiring compassion. In "Wallenstein" Schiller placed himself half-way between the ancient Fate tragedy and the modern drama of character. The hero is destroyed, not in consequence of any voluntary evil deed which he has

The tragic Fate as applied to the modern drama.

The above theory as illustrated by "Wallenstein."

done, but because the will, the possibility of the deed, lives in his mind, and leads him unconsciously to bring about the circumstances which compel him to carry it out. The instinct of self-preservation forces him to commit treason, and the forced and involuntary crime necessitates his destruction. Fate and character coöperate in fashioning the tragic issue, but the latter largely preponderates.

"Maria Stuart."

In "Maria Stuart," Schiller takes the next step in the direction of the antique. He regards it as an advantage in the theme which he has chosen that the facts which have brought about the tragic situation of the heroine were known from history, and precede the tragedy. He compares it in this respect to "Œdipus Colonus." Without troubling himself greatly about her guilt, which, though with many palliating circumstances, he admits, he wishes to represent in her the exaltation of noble suffering. Mary confesses to her nurse Kennedy that she was an accomplice to the murder of Darnley, and she is inclined to regard her present misfortunes as the deserved punishment for that past misdeed. The welfare of England demands the sacrifice of the imprisoned queen; and here immediately a genuinely tragic *motif* suggests itself, which one cannot help wondering that Schiller refused to emphasize. The presence of Mary in the kingdom encourages the enemies of the national religion; conspiracies are discovered, and the realm is in a state of constant ferment and agitation, which interferes with the prosperity of thousands of peaceful citizens. Catholicism, of which Mary is a passionate devotee, is the doomed religion of the past; Protestantism, regardless of its doctrinal merits, is the national religion, and the one best adapted to the genius of the English people. Because, either innocently or consciously, Mary is an obstacle to the irresistible progress of civilization and the highest welfare of the English people, she must be sacrificed. She is in the position of Philemon and Baucis, in "Faust," whose individual rights can-

A genuinely tragic *motif* rejected.

not be respected because they collide with the equally well-established rights of a majority of mankind. This would have been a modern solution of the problem, if the tragic catastrophe were not to be the direct result of the guilty act.

Schiller's solution of the tragic problem.

Schiller finds a third solution, which, as it would appear, deprives the tragedy of much of its dignity. He makes Mary the victim of Elizabeth's personal jealousy. Mary charms all men who approach her; Elizabeth, who is also vain of her imagined beauty, cannot forgive her because Nature has endowed her more bountifully than herself. And from this petty motive springs the elaborate intrigue which ends in Mary's execution. She is not represented as guiltless, but all the sympathy which falls to the share of suffering youth and beauty is naturally accorded to her. Elizabeth, in order to find a legal form to satisfy her spite, institutes a trial against her, and she is sentenced for having plotted against the life of the queen, with a view to placing herself upon the throne and reintroducing the Catholic religion. According to Schiller, the trial was unfair, and she was unjustly condemned. Elizabeth, fearing to carry out the death sentence, tries to hire an assassin; but Paulet is too conscientious, and Mortimer, the next to whom she confides her intention, is secretly the friend of Mary.

Mary's trial and unjust sentence.

The meeting of the two queens in Fotheringay Park, although unhistorical, is superbly dramatic. Elizabeth's motive in seeking the interview seems rather forced; she wishes to ascertain whether her rival's boasted beauty equals the report, and Lord Leicester, who has ambitious plans of his own to further, has led her to believe that her own charms will easily triumph. One can hardly refrain from blaming Schiller for the decidedly partisan spirit in which this scene, and in fact the whole tragedy, is conceived. Mary, although resolving to curb her royal pride, and forget the indignities to which she has been subjected, becomes mightily aroused, and returns

The meeting of the two queens.

insult with insult. Now there is no hope any more. Mortimer enters into a conspiracy to free her from her captivity; but one of the conspirators makes a premature attempt to assassinate Elizabeth, the plot is discovered, Mortimer kills himself, and the popular voice of London demands the death of Mary.

The tragic centre of the drama is really the scene where Mortimer, in passionate self-forgetfulness, makes her possession the price of her deliverance: — Mortimer declares his love for Mary.

> "Die Krone ist von deinem Haupt entfallen,
> Du hast nichts mehr von ird'scher Majestät,
> Versuch es, lass dein Herrscherwort erschallen,
> Ob dir ein Freund, ein Retter aufersteht.
> . . . . Du bist nicht gefühllos,
> Nicht kalter Strenge klagt die Welt dich an,
> Dich kann die heisse Liebesbitte rühren,
> Du hast den Sänger Rizzio beglückt,
> Und jener Bothwell durfte dich entführen."

"In this scene the heroine's past avenges itself upon her; she must feel that in the eyes of her passionate adorer she stands as low as in the eyes of her embittered enemy. Against the reproaches of the latter she dares assert herself with her full pride as a queen; against the fiery youth, who sees nothing but the woman in her, this pride would be of no avail." [1]

Whether the solemn communion scene in the last act, which gave so much offense at the time when the tragedy was first brought upon the stage, is really sacrilegious is a question which every one must decide in accordance with his own feeling. Æsthetically considered, it is hardly out of place, even though it gives the impression that the author looks upon the situation from the queen's point of view, regarding her present suffering and death as the expiation of past wrong-doing. The communion scene.

The characterization is much feebler in "Maria Stuart"

[1] Julian Schmidt: *Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur*, Bd. ii., p. 226.

than in "Wallenstein." There is a certain majestic uniformity in the style, which takes little note of the idiosyncrasies or social position of the *dramatis personæ*. The nurse Kennedy speaks as sonorously, and nearly with the same exalted energy, as Mortimer and the queen herself. Schiller's Greek predilections had now led him to the point where the bold Shaksperean realism of his early days, with its strong flavor of the soil, seems undignified and incompatible with the lofty gravity of a tragic theme. Yet, as we shall see in "Wilhelm Tell," the strong descriptive touches return, and the poet shows a vague inclination to revise and purify rather than reject the artistic creed of his youth.

Style and characterization.

"Maria Stuart" was brought upon the boards in Weimar, June 14, 1800. In January, 1801, it was played for the first time in Berlin. During the same year Cotta brought out two large editions of the tragedy, and in 1802 a third was demanded.

XIV.

IN "The Maid of Orleans" ("Die Jungfrau von Orleans") Schiller has at last found a dramatic *motif* corresponding very nearly to the Greek Fate. A direct divine command comes to the Maid to free France from its enemies, and bring the king to Rheims to be crowned. The gods, or in this case the Virgin Mary, interfere again directly in human affairs, as in the old mythological times, and announce their will in dreams and visions. An important difference, however, lies in the fact that the freedom of choice is not entirely suspended; disobedience is still possible. "The Maid of Orleans."

It is an extremely hazardous thing for a poet to appeal to a faith which is no longer living and real. In Spain or Italy "The Maid of Orleans" might perhaps have become a national drama, but in Germany never. It is the miraculous atmosphere of Calderon and the Catholic legends which pervades it, and the whole tragedy is accordingly too far removed from our own moral consciousness to stir the deeper strata of our being. It is full of fine spectacular effects, which excite a certain pleasurable wonder; being no longer bound by the laws of this mundane sphere, we are at liberty to expect anything, and when the Maid, having been fettered with triple chains, breaks them by main force, we are not in the least surprised. It was probably to prepare the reader for these marvelous performances that Schiller added the sub-title, "A Romantic Tragedy," as the Romantic name at that time was synonymous with all kinds of mythological marvels and supernatural extravagance. The miraculous element in the tragedy.

It has been asserted that no great national drama can spring up without a vital, all-pervading national religion. The poet must be borne up by the national feeling, must know and share the emotions to which he is to appeal. At Schiller's time, Germany had no national religion; in fact, the Germans were no nation. The Romanticists had harped continually upon the necessity of a Christian mythology, to give body and form to poetic conceptions, and a number of them even embraced the Catholic faith, apparently moved by a mere æsthetic craving for a mythology. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Schiller, although he ridiculed many of the tendencies of the Romantic School, was unconsciously influenced by them, and that in "The Maid of Orleans" he attempted to beat them on their own ground. It is well known that while the plot was assuming shape with him he was reading Tieck's "Genoveva," where mediæval superstitions and pious marvels abound. But, as long as all civilized nations have at least an ethical consciousness in common, as long as there are universally human emotions which are sure to vibrate to the poet's touch, what necessity is there to construct an artificial mythology, or to revive a dead one, merely for the sake of certain poetic and spectacular effects?

The influence of the Romantic School upon Schiller.

Schiller has attempted to lift his heroine above the logic of reality by imparting to her a certain demoniac loftiness and grandeur. She has an irresistible faith in her own mission, and the doubts of Dunois, the king, and the Duke of Burgundy are dispelled by the miraculous proofs she gives of her power. The killing of the youth Montgomery, who has thrown away his sword and implores her to spare his life, is evidently done in her capacity of prophetess and seer; she is commanded to spare no one born of an English mother. And for all that, this very unreal scene, which was to fill us with dread and impress us with the Maid's demoniac character, has a touch

The demoniac character of the heroine.

of melodrama in it which spoils the intended effect. Declamations like the following, in spite of the beautiful rhythm of the verse, immediately suggest an operatic attitude, and do not sound genuine:— Operatic declamation.

JOHANNA.

"Betrogner Thor! Verlorner! In der Jungfrau Hand
Bist du gefallen, die verderbliche, woraus
Nicht Rettung noch Erlösung mehr zu hoffen ist.
. . . . . .
Nicht mein Geschlecht beschwöre! Nenne mich nicht Weib.
Gleichwie die körperlosen Geister, die nicht frei'n
Auf ird'sche Weise, schliess ich mich an kein Geschlecht
Der Menschen an, und dieser Panzer deckt kein Herz," etc.

This strength of inspiration, however, is only to last as long as she guards her heart against earthly love. The Maid who is to deliver France must be the bride of Heaven, must be chaste. But Joan of Arc is also a mortal woman, and at the sight of the English chieftain Lionel her womanly nature asserts itself. Her heart is moved; she breaks the divine command, and spares his life. From that moment her faith in herself begins to desert her, and when her own father accuses her of witchcraft before the king and the assembled people, she remains silent, and refuses to defend herself. She is banished, and falls into the hands of the English. Lionel offers her his love; but her former heroism has again awakened. She had been weak but for a moment; now she has regained her faith in herself and in her mission. Lionel is called to combat, and a soldier stands at the window and reports to Joan and the queen, Isabeau, the progress of the battle. When she hears that the French are yielding, and that the king is captured, she breaks her iron fetters, seizes a sword, and rushes to the rescue of her countrymen. She saves the king, routs the English, is mortally wounded, and dies in ecstasy. The tragic problem. A sketch of the plot.

As will easily be seen, this whole beautiful structure rests upon the most artificial basis. If a legend or a marvelous

historical incident is to be made the subject of a drama at the present day, the author must take note of the changes which humanity has undergone since the legend was a matter of belief, or the incident took place. Each century revises the historical and religious judgments of its predecessors. The facts remain, but their explanation is ever varying. In "The Maid of Orleans," Schiller ignores the nineteenth century.[1] To a mediæval public, the tragedy would no doubt have been very edifying, but to us it is little better than a melodrama, written in faultless, well-sounding verse, and full of poetic beauty.

The artificial character of the problem.

The fatal weakness of the plot lies in the fact that the Maid's guilt is no guilt to us; and we do not believe in case her mission was directly from God, as the poet would have us believe, that He would withdraw His help from her because she was what He had made her, — a woman. There is no evidence in the text that she falls; she merely loves. It is not the fact that she loves an enemy of France which causes her destruction, but her reluctant obedience to the voice of nature.

A fatal discrepancy.

"The Maid of Orleans" appeared first serially in a Berlin periodical, "Taschenkalender für Damen" (1801). In November, 1801, it was played, with immense success, at the Court Theatre in Berlin. Five editions appeared during the years 1801–1805.

A magnificent ovation was accorded to Schiller in September, 1801, when, after having spent some days with Körner in Dresden, he passed through Leipsic, and visited the theatre where "The Maid of Orleans" was just being played. At the end of the first act, as it became known that the author of the

A magnificent ovation in Leipsic.

[1] Julian Schmidt, in an admirable chapter (*Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur*, Bd. ii., pp. 252-253), points out the way in which the tragic problem might have been solved psychologically and in accordance with modern beliefs.

drama was present, the audience arose and cried, "Long live Friedrich Schiller!"

At the end of the performance the spectators rushed and elbowed their way out, in order to see the beloved singer near by. As his tall figure, bent by suffering, appeared, the multitude reverentially opened a passage; all heads were instantly uncovered; a deep stillness surrounded the poet as he walked through the long rows of men. All hearts, all eyes, were seeking him; fathers and mothers lifted their children up, and whispered, "There he is; it is he." [1]

[1] Palleske: Bd. ii., p. 525.

XV.

"THE Bride of Messina" was begun in August, 1802, and finished in February, 1803. It is the logical and inevitable result of Schiller's Greek tendencies. He was not the man to shrink from any conclusion, however extreme. Accordingly, we have here no longer any attempt at reconciling the sovereign Fate with any modern or Christian form of thought; without reference to historic beliefs, Fate is simply reëstablished in its ancient rights, and rules over the lives and actions of men as absolutely as it did in the days of Sophocles and Æschylus. Even the chorus is reintroduced, with its cry of "woe, woe, woe, woe," exactly as in the "Prometheus" and the "Agamemnon." But what is most marvelous, and, in spite of Schiller's able defense in the preface, what remains a lasting blemish, is that Christian and pagan ethics, beliefs, and even forms of speech seem to coexist in the tragedy, and produce an almost hopeless confusion. Even Mohammedan superstitions enter, though somewhat remotely, into the plot. It is hardly a sufficient reason for this mixture that, as Schiller observes, "the stage of action is Messina, where these three religions were yet existing, partly as living realities, partly in monuments, and appealed to the senses." If the struggle between two religions — for instance, the ancient paganism and Christianity — had been the theme and principal momentum of the action, such a defense might have been accepted; but consider what deplorable creatures these people must be, who at one moment avow their faith in the Saviour and the Virgin, at

"The Bride of Messina."

The sovereignty of Fate.

Christianity, Mohammedanism, and Greek paganism represented as coexisting.

another talk with genuine Greek *naïveté* of oracles and inexorable Fate, and for fear of neglecting any possible deity occasionally consult the wisdom of Mohammedan sages!

The plot is conceived in a genuinely Greek spirit, and reminds one at every point of the "Œdipus." The old prince of Messina had stolen his father's bride, and the father had cursed him and his descendants. Two sons are born, Don Manuel and Don Cæsar; and when the third child is expected the prince has a dream, which is interpreted to mean that his wife Isabella will bear him a daughter, who will be the destruction of both his sons. He therefore commands that the child shall be killed as soon as it is born. But the mother, who has had another dream, with a very different meaning, as she imagines, sends the daughter secretly away to a convent, where she is brought up in ignorance of her origin. The seer who interprets the mother's dream declares that the sister will in time unite in love the hearts of the two brothers, who already as children hate each other with a bitter and passionate hatred. A sketch of the plot.

Years pass by; the old prince dies, and the mother succeeds in reconciling the two turbulent sons. Full of joy they both confess to her that they have chosen each a bride, whom they wish her to receive in the palace. The mother in return reveals to them the existence of the sister, Beatrice, and her reason for hiding her so long. Don Manuel had met his betrothed by accident, while pursuing a deer, which sought refuge with a nun, whose wonderful dignity and beauty had conquered his heart. Fortunately she had not yet taken the vow, and he had that very night, when her parents were to reclaim her, carried her away, and now kept her concealed in the city. Don Cæsar had seen his beloved for the first time at his father's funeral. It is needless to say that cruel Fate, who feasts on the misery of mortals, had taken care that the ancient curse should be fulfilled. They both love their sister Reconciliation of the brothers.

Beatrice. Don Cæsar surprises her in his brother's arms, and in a paroxysm of wrath kills him. On learning who his beloved is, he can no longer endure the sight of the sun, and kills himself. The mother only and the daughter remain to bemoan their evil fate, and reproach the gods for having dealt thus cruelly with them. Isabella's lament sounds as if it were a verbatim translation from one of the Greek dramatists: —

Don Cæsar kills his brother.

Isabella's lament.

"Nicht zähmen will ich meine Zunge, laut
Wie mir das Herz gebietet will ich reden.
Warum besuchen wir die heil'gen Häuser
Und heben zu dem Himmel fromme Hände?
Gutmüth'ge Thoren, was gewinnen wir
Mit unserm Glauben? So unmöglich ist's,
Die Götter, die hochwohnenden zu treffen,
Als in den Mond mit einem Pfeil zu schiessen.
Vermauert ist dem Sterblichen die Zukunft,
Und kein Gebet durchbohrt den eh'rnen Himmel."

The two apparently conflicting dreams are substituted for the ambiguity of the ancient oracles. The sister unites the hearts of the brothers in love, and still becomes their destruction. All efforts to frustrate the decree of Fate, or in this instance the curse, are futile, and the very attempt to escape from it becomes the means of its fulfillment.

A substitute for the ancient oracles.

Nothing can exceed the dignity and loftiness of the style in this tragedy. The purest breath of poetry pervades it from beginning to end. Some of the choral songs especially are marvels of rhythmic power and elegance. Schiller might well, after having written verses like these, flatter himself that, if he had lived during the Periclean era, he would have been a worthy rival of Sophocles. And this, as we know from a letter to Wilhelm von Humboldt, was actually his ambition.

The style.

The appearance of "The Bride of Messina" naturally led to discussion of the question whether the Greek chorus could ever become a living organic element of the modern

drama. Apart from the glaring absurdities which the poet evidently in his classic zeal overlooked, as, for instance, where the two choruses, after the reconciliation of the brothers, rush into a promiscuous embrace, or where Don Manuel confides his secret to the chorus, consisting of at least a dozen men, it is not to be denied that as the representative of the ideal spectator, asserting the universal moral judgment against the passionate bias of the *dramatis personæ*, the chorus seems, theoretically at least, to have its *raison d'être*. Practically it has always proved a failure. With the structure of our theatre, so different from that of the Greeks, and the character of our drama, it will always remain an artificial excrescence. The classes which with us constitute the theatrical public do not lose themselves so completely in the representation as to endanger the soundness of their judgment; and, moreover, such a running moral commentary on the action would seriously interfere with the illusion. It is the intense personality of the modern drama, its vigorous characterization and interesting intrigue, which constitute its chief attractions to the spectator; while with the Greeks it was an instrument of culture, of a national and semi-religious character. The plot was known to every one, being merely a free treatment of a national legend; the characters were general heroic types, and but faintly individualized, and where they struggle ineffectually to frustrate the hostile designs of Fate a chorus might well, from a Greek point of view, be needed to emphasize the moral justice of the catastrophe, which, to all appearances, violated all human ideas of equity and justice. But with the disappearance of the belief in Fate, in the Greek sense, the necessity and legitimacy of the chorus have also disappeared.

The chorus in the modern drama.

Reasons why the chorus cannot be reintroduced.

"The Bride of Messina" was first played in Weimar, March 19, 1803. The general impression was favorable, but dissenting voices were soon heard, and the tragedy did

not maintain itself long upon the stage. Karl August declared that Schiller was riding a hobby, and hoped that experience would soon teach him a lesson. Goethe, on the other hand, was delighted, and asserted that the representation of this tragedy had consecrated the German stage for better things to come. Schiller himself wrote to Körner that he had now for the first time gained an impression of what a true tragedy was.

"The Bride of Messina" on the stage.

A printed edition was published by Cotta, in 1803, and two piratical editions followed. A multitude of imitations, with and without chorus, appeared during the following years.

XVI.

IN the autumn of 1802, Schiller received from the Emperor, Francis II., a diploma of nobility. It may be superfluous to say that he thought very lightly of this honor, but for the sake of his wife, who was of noble birth, and that of his children, he accepted it with thanks. In a letter to Wilhelm von Humboldt, he is inclined to take a humorous view of his new rank: "You must have laughed when you heard of our elevation to the noble rank; it was one of our duke's fancies, and as it is now done, then, for the sake of Lolo and the children I will let it pass."

Schiller elevated to the nobility.

In December, 1803, while Schiller was deeply absorbed in his new drama "Wilhelm Tell," Madame de Staël arrived in Weimar. Goethe, probably for the purpose of avoiding her, went to Jena, and this "tempest in petticoats," as he afterwards called her, fell with all her fury of enthusiasm and a perfect deluge of rhetoric upon the unfortunate Schiller. His letter to Goethe (December 21, 1803), describing the remarkable visitor, is a masterpiece of characterization. In the very first interview he had taken the exact measure of the brilliant Frenchwoman, and with admirable precision sounded the depths as well as the shallows of her versatile mind.

Madame de Staël in Weimar.

"She represents French culture purely and in a very interesting light. . . . . Her nature and temperament are better than her philosophy, and her beautiful intelligence reaches the rank of genius. She must explain and measure everything; she admits of nothing dark and inaccessible; and where she

Schiller's characterization of Madame de Staël

cannot throw light with her torch, there, to her, nothing exists. . . . . For that which we call poetry she has no sense; of such works she can only appreciate the passionate and rhetorical element and the general ideas; she will not countenance anything false, but on the other hand does not always recognize that which is genuine. The only thing which makes her burdensome is the extraordinary volubility of her tongue; one must transform one's whole self into an organ of hearing in order to follow her."

Madame de Staël's opinion of Schiller.

Of still greater interest is Madame de Staël's account of Schiller. Speaking of her controversy with him regarding the comparative merits of the French and the German drama, she remarks: "The simplicity of character which led a man of genius to engage in a controversy in which he could not find words for his thoughts made a great impression upon me. I found him so modest and so careless as to the impression which he produced personally, so proud and animated in the defense of what he regarded as the truth, that from this moment I cherished an admiring friendship for him."

French conversation.

It is not surprising that Schiller had difficulty in finding the fitting expression for his thoughts, as the conversation was carried on exclusively in French, which language he had never acquired to perfection. Nevertheless, Madame de Staël was filled with wonder at the depth and power of his ideas, and she has happily emphasized the eminently ethical character of his whole literary activity in the epigram, "Sa conscience est sa muse."

Although Schiller's patience bordered on the heroic, Madame de Staël came very near exhausting it. When, after a prolonged stay, she finally took her departure, he wrote to Goethe that he felt as if he had passed through a serious illness.

"Wilhelm Tell."

"Wilhelm Tell," the last drama which Schiller completed, was begun in August, 1803, and finished in February, 1804. The failure of "The Bride of

Messina" to maintain itself permanently on the stage had finally convinced the poet that the Greek tragedy, with all its undeniable dignity and beauty, was essentially an exotic, and could never be domesticated in German soil. Shakspere began to reassert his early influence upon him, and he determined to write a drama of a truly national character, which should appeal directly to the German heart. Tschudi's "Swiss Chronicle" fell into his hands, and a worthy theme immediately presented itself. It is well known that Goethe, after his return from Switzerland in 1779, contemplated writing an epic, with Wilhelm Tell for its hero. The subject was discussed with Schiller, both in letters and in conversation, but as an appropriate form would not suggest itself the idea was finally dropped. It is supremely characteristic of the manner in which Goethe intended to treat the legend that he wished to subordinate the national uprising, and the conspiracy of the Rütli, to the personality of the hero. Tell was to have been a strong, self-dependent man, of the primitive type, who in avenging his wrongs chances to benefit his people. The fundamental traits of Tell's character, as indicated by Tschudi, rather favor this interpretation, which would, however, have necessitated a very free treatment of the legend.

Goethe's projected epic, "Wilhelm Tell."

Schiller has expended much ingenuity in reconciling the primitive traits in the character of his hero — his self-dependence, his aversion for deliberations, and his promptness in action — with his patriotic purpose. Nevertheless, the drama contains two separate intrigues which run parallel with each other, sometimes loosely connected, but without absolute interdependence. As far as the conspirators of the Rütli are concerned, it is purely an accident that Tell kills Gessler, thereby freeing his country from its oppressor. Tell was not present at the Rütli, and in his soliloquy before the slaying repeatedly emphasizes the idea that it is the necessity of protecting

The defects of the plot in Schiller's "Wilhelm Tell."

himself, his wife, and his children which forces him to take the law into his own hands. The fact that Tell has knowledge of the conspiracy, and is in sympathy with it, is hardly an adequate solution of the problem; it indicates an identity of interests, but not a logical sequence of coherent events.

The opening scene in "Wilhelm Tell."

The opening scene, with the songs of the fisherman's boy, the herdsman, and the Alpine hunter to the melody of the *ranz-des-vaches*, opens a sudden fair vista into the very heart of Swiss life and scenery. It is a poetic epitome of Switzerland. And the songs have a touch of that strange, vague, weird element which we missed in Schiller's other ballads, — something that, for no definable reason, sends a delicious shudder through one's nerves. The song of the fisher possesses this element to a greater degree than those of the herdsman and the hunter. The opening lines, with their beautiful simplicity and directness, have the genuine ballad tone: —

The song of the fisherman's boy.

"Es lächelt der See, er ladet zum Bade,
Der Knabe schlief ein am grünen Gestade."

And the latter half of the verse, where the liquid consonantal sounds vaguely suggest the plashing of the waves, might well have come out of an old ballad book: —

"Und wie er erwachet in seliger Lust,
Da spülen die Wasser ihm um die Brust,
Und es ruft aus den Tiefen:
Lieb' Knabe, bist mein!
Ich locke den Schläfer,
Ich zieh' ihn herein."

Realism and dramatic power of the scene.

Then the gradual gathering of the storm, and the conversation, full of pithy local allusions, to which it gives rise; the precipitate appearance of Baumgarten, fleeing for his life; the arrival of Tell; the hair-breadth escape; and the rage of the governor's troopers, — that is all superbly dramatic, redolent with the flavor of the soil, and imparts to the Tell legend, as it were, a higher

verity than that of fact. How vigorous, how full of the olden patriarchal spirit, are the conversation of Stauffacher with his wife, and the scene where Attinghausen drinks the morning cup with his servants! And the opening of the third act, where little Walter Tell sings his hunting song, and Hedwig, Tell's excellent housewife, speaks of the dangers of the hunter's life,—it is like a breath of the fresh Alpine air blowing into our faces.

Rudenz and Bertha von Bruneck.

The scenes in which Rudenz and Bertha appear are much feebler. Schiller probably felt that a pair of lovers belonged to a drama, and he constructed this little sub-intrigue in deference to the popular demand. But Rudenz, who deserts the cause of his countrymen and upholds the tyrant because he loves the latter's kinswoman, and then when he discovers that his beloved detests her relative becomes ardently patriotic, is hardly a lover in whose success the spectator can be supposed to be vitally interested.

An anecdote related by Eckermann.

Concerning the celebrated scene where Tell shoots the apple from his son's head, Eckermann [1] relates the following characteristic anecdote. Goethe is introduced as speaking: "I recollect what trouble I had with him [Schiller] when he wanted to make Gessler, in 'Tell,' abruptly break an apple from the tree, and have it shot from the boy's head. This was quite against my nature, and I urged him to give at least some motive to this barbarity, by making the boy boast to Gessler of his father's dexterity, and say that he could shoot an apple from a tree at a hundred paces. Schiller, at first, would have nothing of the sort; but at last he yielded to my arguments and intentions, and did as I advised him. . . . . A certain love of the horrible adhered to him from the time of 'The Robbers,' which never quite left him, even in his prime. I still recollect perfectly well that in the prison scene in my

[1] *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret*, pp. 111, 112. Bohn Standard Library, London, 1874.

'Egmont,' where the sentence is read to him, Schiller would have made Alva appear in the background, masked and muffled in a cloak, enjoying the effect which the sentence would produce on Egmont. Thus Alva was to show himself insatiable in revenge and malice. I, however, protested, and prevented the apparition. He was a great, odd man."

Herodotian simplicity and singleness of character in the *dramatis personæ*.

Schiller, in spite of his predilection for extreme types, had the good sense not to complicate or elaborate the primitive singleness and simplicity of character which distinguish the Swiss conspirators, as represented by Tschudi. He perceived immediately the precious value of every little local touch, a patriarchal habit or turn of speech, and with painstaking care he gathered these together from histories, chronicles, and especially from Goethe's letters and oral descriptions. Dialectic expressions, like Gertrude Stauffacher's "*Mein lieber Herr und Ehewirth*," and Homeric phrases, as "*der glatten Pferde wohlgenährte Zucht*," and Tell's "*du Bringer bitt'rer Schmerzen*," in his apostrophe to his bow, are employed throughout the drama with consummate effect. It is all so vivid, so real, so marvelously convincing.

Local idioms and Homeric phrases.

Melchthal's apostrophe to the light.

If there is anything which may seem to interfere with this general impression, it is the occasional attacks, to which Schiller is still subject, of his old declamatory ardor. When, for instance, Melchthal, a young peasant lad, on hearing that the governor has blinded his father, bursts into a magnificent apostrophe to the light, no one can help being a little incredulous. This is not, even allowing for the historic remoteness and the exaltation of the moment, the language of a peasant: —

> "O, eine edle Himmelsgabe ist
> Das Licht des Auges — Alle Wesen leben
> Vom Lichte, jedes glückliche Geschöpf —
> Die Pflanze selbst kehrt freudig sich zum Lichte," etc.

On the other hand, Schiller's realistic sense prevented him from committing a mistake which would have been quite natural, and which certainly lay very near at hand. Vague declamations about liberty, equality, and the rights of men were very prevalent during the years immediately following the French Revolution, and it would not have been strange if Schiller had inspired his Swiss conspirators with something of the French revolutionary enthusiasm. If he had been heartily in sympathy with the Revolution, it would, no doubt, have been a great temptation to him to produce what the Germans call a "drama of tendency," full of modern sentiments clothed in anachronistic language. It is therefore the more meritorious, on his part, that he has kept the speech, as well as the aspirations of his heroes, within the limits of the historic period to which they belonged, or were supposed to belong.[1] They wish merely to reëstablish the ancient confederacy of their fathers, to bring back "the olden times and the old Switzerland."

The aspirations of the Swiss patriots not identical with those of the French revolutionists.

"Wilhelm Tell" is deservedly the most popular of all Schiller's dramas. March 17, 1804, when it was first performed on the stage in Weimar, it was greeted with an immense enthusiasm. In July a similar reception was accorded to it in Berlin. During the same year two editions in different forms were published by Cotta.

"Wilhelm Tell" on the stage.

[1] Compare H. Hettner: *Goethe und Schiller.* Zweiter Band, p. 323. Braunschweig, 1876.

XVII.

WITH heroic constancy and a clear consciousness of what he wished to attain, Schiller had persevered in the path which already in his early youth he had marked out for himself. He had now achieved that technical mastery which enabled him to combine loftiness of tone with realistic strength; his brain was teeming with dramatic projects and problems, and with alternate anxiety and confidence, according to the changing states of his health, he looked forward to the future. In spite of his constant suffering, he clung tenaciously to life, hoping and believing that it might at least be spared to him until he had reached fifty. The idea seemed too cruel that he should have to abandon his joyous activity, fraught with blessings to the race, just now when, after so long a struggle, he had brought about the conditions necessary for its effective pursuit. It affects one strangely to read that about this time he had entered no less than twenty-five titles for future dramas, sometimes with brief sketches of their plots, in his private journal; notwithstanding the repeated and frequent premonitions which Death gave him of his coming, he could not persuade himself that his hour was really so near at hand.

Schiller's endurance in suffering and his unflagging energy.

In May, 1804, Schiller went with his wife and two sons to Berlin, where he was received with great distinction. When, on the 4th of May, "The Bride of Messina" was played at the Royal Theatre, the public showed its love for the poet by a hearty and spontaneous demonstration. He dined with the prince Louis Ferdinand, and had an audience with the king, who was gracious enough

Visit to Berlin.

to express the wish that Schiller might live in Berlin, and write for the Royal Theatre. But when Schiller, after his return to Weimar, stated the terms on which he was willing to remove to Berlin, his majesty showed no special eagerness; in fact did not think the matter of sufficient importance to have an answer returned.[1] The Duke of Weimar, on the other hand, at the poet's request, raised his salary to four hundred thalers.

The dramatic fragment "Demetrius."

The unfinished drama "Demetrius," on which Schiller labored up to the time of his death, and which even haunted his dying thoughts, represents the high-water mark of his poetic activity. The problem is full of tragic interest. It is the story of the Russian pretender Demetrius, usually known as the False Demetrius. Schiller first introduces him as an ambitious and large-minded youth, who in his obscurity has visions of a great future; then, as the conviction possesses him that he is the son of the late Czar and the heir to the throne, he presents himself before the Polish parliament, relates his marvelous past, demands help, and makes large promises. The parliament breaks up with much feigned and some genuine enthusiasm; a rebellion is organized, and volunteers are enlisted. Especially magnificent is the scene where Demetrius seeks the old empress, Marfa, in her convent, and demands her decision whether he is actually her son. So far Demetrius has acted in good faith; but the refusal to recognize him shakes this faith, and finally the confession of the murderer who slew the actual Demetrius convinces him of his error. Not only is his own life in danger, but the lives of thousands who have taken up arms in his behalf are staked on his success; the instinct of self-preservation prompts him to persevere, trusting to luck and force rather than to right and justice. The tragic conflict is a terrible one; but the voice of prudence conquers. Demetrius becomes an impos-

The crisis in the career of Demetrius.

[1] Emil Palleske: *Schiller's Leben und Werke.* Zweiter Band, pp. 575, 576. Stuttgart, 1877.

tor. The Czar Boris Godunow, who had hired a murderer to kill the genuine Czarowitz, poisons himself, and the pretender mounts the throne. The empress Marfa is again importuned to declare whether he is her son; she is to kiss the cross while making her declaration. She now publicly disowns him; a band of conspirators rush in, and Demetrius falls, stabbed to the heart, at Marfa's feet.

Quotation from Schiller's "Demetrius."

As a specimen of the strength and dignity of the verse, I quote the following from the soliloquy of Demetrius, when he has first learned that he is the son of the Czar Iwan:—

"Da lösten sich mit diesem einz'gen Wort
Die Räthsel alle meines dunkeln Wesens.
Nicht bloss an Zeichen die betrüglich sind,
In tiefer Brust, an meines Herzens Schlägen,
Fühlt' ich in mir das königliche Blut,
Und eher will ich's tropfenweis verspritzen,
Als meinem Recht entsagen und der Krone."

Schiller's illness during the winter of 1804–5.

During the winter of 1804–5 Schiller had several severe attacks of illness. New Year's Day, 1805, Goethe had a distinct foreboding, which he expressed to Frau von Stein, that either he or his friend would die during the year. When, during the next months, both were prostrated, Goethe with nephritic colic, Schiller with catarrhal fever, there seemed to be considerable cause for anxiety. Heinrich Voss, the son of the translator of Homer, who had lately become a resident of Weimar, frequently undertook the duty of watching with the two sick poets during the night. "Goethe," he says, "is rather a turbulent invalid, but Schiller is the personification of patience and gentleness. How the man suffered the first time I watched with him!"[1] Caroline von Wolzogen also speaks of "the ineffable gentleness" of Schiller during the years of his suffering. His chief care seemed to be to give as little trouble

H. Voss's account of Schiller during his illness.

[1] *Quoted* from Palleske: *Schiller's Leben und Werke.* Zweiter Band, *p. 597.*

as possible to his wife, and to gain a respite of life sufficient to finish his "Demetrius." If, for a single day, he felt sufficiently strong to return to his labor, he was as happy as a child.

Goethe's joy at Schiller's recovery.

Great was the joy of Goethe when his friend recovered from his illness. Every one knows that he was not a demonstrative man; but the first time Schiller visited him, during his convalescence, entering his study unannounced, he sprang up and clasped him in a long embrace. During the months of March and April "Demetrius" progressed slowly; April 29th the fever returned, and during the first days of May reached its crisis. Voss, Caroline von Wolzogen, and Lotte took turns in watching at his bedside. In his delirium he talked incessantly of "Demetrius," sometimes reciting scene after scene, with excited look and gestures. On the evening of May 8th his mind was clear, and he demanded to see the sun. The curtains were drawn from the windows, and the sunshine streamed into the room. A beautiful, serene expression lighted up his countenance; it was his last greeting to the sun. As his sister-in-law stooped down over him, and asked him how he was, he whispered, "Cheerful, ever more cheerful."

The last days of Schiller.

Schiller's death, May 9, 1805.

May 9th he was again unconscious. As Lotte, in the evening, attempted to lift his head, so as to arrange the pillow more comfortably, he opened his eyes and smiled. She knelt down and pressed his head to her bosom; he kissed her, and fell again into a stupor. His last conscious act was to kiss the woman whom he loved. "Suddenly something like an electric shock vibrated through his whole frame. His head fell back; the most perfect peace reigned in his countenance." [1]

[1] Dr. Karl Hoffmeister: *Schiller's Leben, Geistesentwickelunge und Werke.* Fünfter Theil, p. 329. Stuttgart, 1842. I have compared the accounts of Schiller's death in Palleske and Hoffmeister, but do not find that they differ materially. The latter, however, is rather more circumstantial than the former.

Goethe's elegy on Schiller.

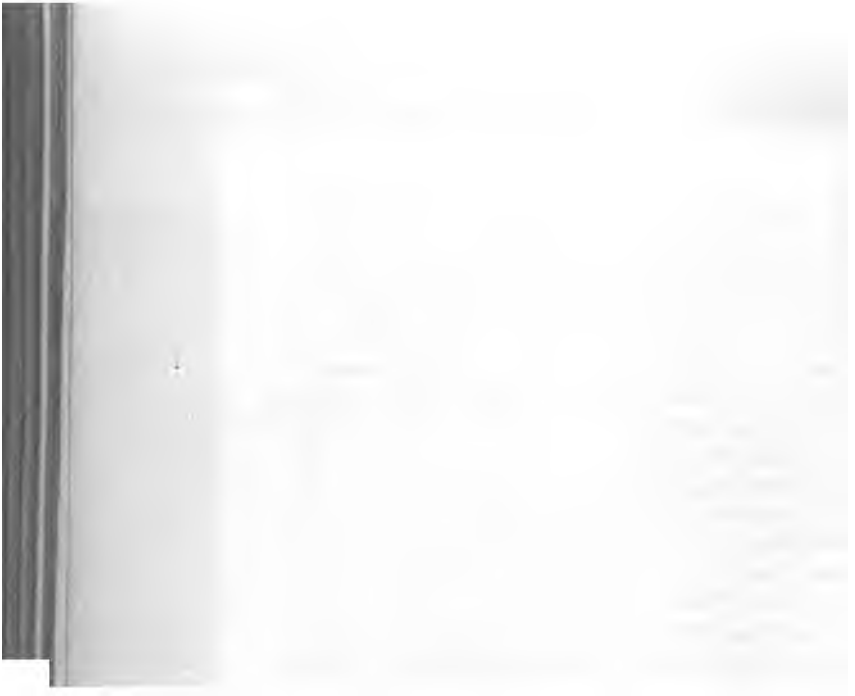
What more beautiful memorial could a poet desire than that imperishable monument which Goethe consecrated to Schiller's memory, — that wonderful, noble, and touching elegy called "An Epilogue to the Song of the Bell." It is only the tenderness and the dignity of a sacred sorrow which can inspire such exalted and yet such simple and heart-moving language. No characterization of Schiller can approach in terse strength and poetic intensity the following lines: —

Quotation from Goethe's elegy.

"Nun glühte seine Wange roth und röther
Von jener Jugend die uns nie entflieht,
Von jenem Muth, der früher oder später,
Den Widerstand der stumpfen Welt besiegt,
Von jenem Glauben, der sich, stets erhöhter,
Bald kühn hervordrängt, bald geduldig schmiegt,
Damit das Gute wirke, wachse, fromme,
Damit der Tag dem Edlen endlich komme.

. . . . . .

Ihr kanntet ihn, wie er mit Riesenschritte
Den Kreis des Wollens, des Vollbringens mass,
Durch Zeit und Land, der Völker Sinn und Sitte,
Das dunkle Buch mit heiterm Blicke las;
Doch wie er athemlos in unsrer Mitte
In Leiden bangte, kümmerlich genas:
Das haben wir in traurig-schönen Jahren,
Denn er war unser, leidend miterfahren."



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